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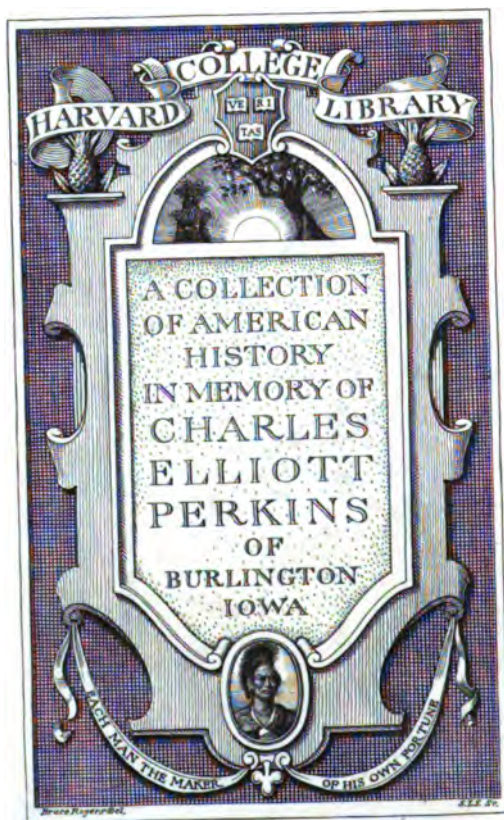
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THE HISTORY OF THE

REIGN OF THE

EMPEROR

NO. ON CLIFF-STREET.

1842.



THE LIFE

OF

WILLBUR FISK, D.D.,

FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY.

BY

JOSEPH HOLDICH.

"Here and there is found one who admits the religion of Heaven in its own manner, and imbibes its sublimity and beauty without detriment, and glorifies God, the giver of all, by displaying the triple nobility of Nature, Culture, and Faith."—TAYLOR'S *Saturday Evening*.

"—whose faith follow."—*Heb.*, xiii., 7.

NEW-YORK:

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P R E F A C E.

THE biographer of Dr. Fisk submits the result of his labour to the judgment of the Christian public with unfeigned diffidence. This feeling is occasioned partly by a natural distrust of his own abilities, and partly by his experience of the difficulties of the undertaking.

Those who are at all skilled in authorship well know that historical and biographical composition is peculiarly perplexing and laborious; and it will be obvious to all, on very slight reflection, that the labour of writing a biography depends very much on the diversity in the character and relations of the subject, for in proportion to these will be the demand on the author's resources, judgment, and skill. Had Dr. Fisk's life been devoted entirely, or even chiefly, to one pursuit, had his character possessed interest in only a single aspect, or were his biography to have been adapted to any selected class of readers, the writer's task would have been comparatively easy. But the life of any man should be in accordance with his entire character and pursuits. In this lay the difficulty of our present undertaking. To depict correctly the diversified character of our subject; to trace his connexion with the many important enterprises in which he was concerned; to give to each of these its relative prominence and just proportion; to adapt the work to the various classes in the community who may be supposed to take an interest in our subject; to present a just account of his share in the controversies in which he was engaged, without giving needless offence to those who differed from him, were some

of the duties which rendered the author's task one of more than ordinary delicacy, and required no little thought and labour.

One topic suggested above deserves, perhaps, to be made a little more prominent. Dr. Fisk was a man of erudition and literature, and, as such, was connected with the republic of letters. On the other hand, he was not less the man of the people. To have written his book exclusively for the former would not have been satisfactory to the latter, and to have written it entirely for the latter would have displeased the former, while in neither case would he have been true to his subject's memory. Whether the writer have succeeded in harmonizing these conflicting claims must be left for the reader to determine ; but he wishes that this view of the subject may be kept in mind in deciding on the nature and merits of the work.

A word or two may be proper on another topic. It was impossible to do justice to the character of Dr. Fisk without entering somewhat upon the history of the controversies which occupied much of his attention. In doing this, his biographer has endeavoured to maintain a suitable liberality towards the parties concerned. Although it has been his aim to exhibit his subject's views rather than his own, yet in some cases he has given his own in presenting those of his subject ; but in doing this, it has been his aim to write of opinions and systems rather than of persons. Like his subject, the biographer has many valuable friends on both sides of the various questions treated on in his work, none of whom he would willingly offend. He trusts that he will not have done so. Nevertheless, if he should have been so unfortunate, the only apology he can make is, truth first, and friendship afterward. The author is aware, however, that he has been led to present a few names to the reader in a rather unfavourable light. The principle he has gone on in this was,

never to do so except where it was necessary to vindicate his subject, or only where the person had given his own name to the public in a manner calculated to injure Dr. Fisk. This is perfectly fair, and the persons concerned can have no right to complain. He that ventures an assault upon another, should expect the natural consequences of his own action.

To some it may appear, as, indeed, it has often been remarked, that Dr. Fisk's life was destitute of incident. If by incident be meant merely physical action, such incident, that is, as constitutes the burden of a romance, consisting of thrilling adventure,

"Of hair-breadth escapes in the imminent deadly breach,"

or

"Of moving accidents by flood and field,"

it may, to a certain extent, prove true; but even of this his life was far from being destitute, especially in the days of his itinerancy. But if by incident be included those transactions which show the mental and moral character, and especially such as are connected with the welfare of human beings and the honour of our common Saviour, we think his life will not be found deficient in incident; how, indeed, could it be, connected as he was with so many important transactions? Most of the leading enterprises of the day shared in his labours, and in several of them, as education, temperance, missions, and religion in general, he was looked up to as a controlling mind. He was eminently a practical man, and, as such, his whole life was full of incident relating either to the intellect or to the heart. It has been the aim of the biographer to present a correct view of his subject's labours in these several departments, and especially as he was satisfied that upon these, next to a delineation of his personal piety and individual character, most of the interest and instruction of this volume must depend. How far he

has succeeded in doing justice to this portion of his work, the public must determine ; but, at any rate, he has the gratification of feeling that he has spared no pains to render it as satisfactory as the materials within his reach would allow.

Does the reader demand from me any explanation of my assuming the responsible task of preparing Dr. Fisk's biography ? Possibly he may ; and, if so, he may please to accept the following :

When Dr. Fisk's illness assumed an alarming appearance, some of his friends suggested to him the propriety of naming a biographer. At first he declined, saying that nothing could be said of him ; but, on being urged, he saw fit to designate me, a nomination in which they concurred. I was at this time away from home, it being our long vacation. As soon as I heard of his danger, I hastened back without delay, and, on receiving information of the selection which had been made, I lost no time in conversing with him on the subject. He was then so far gone that he spoke with great difficulty. All his communications to me were made with his usual modesty. He said he had kept no journal, had very few papers relating to himself, and his letters were so much of a business character that but few of them would be of service in a memoir, and that he did not know that I should find enough to make anything more than an article for a periodical. He concluded with committing the whole to my judgment and determination. I also inquired if he had any manuscripts that could be printed. He replied, in substance, none ready for the public eye, nor anything sufficiently advanced to be completed by another. At the same time, he expressed a desire that it might be thought advisable to compile a small volume from his published works that might sell for the benefit of his family, as he left them very inadequately provided for.

I was also assured by Mrs. Fisk that she approved the selection of a biographer.

To me this was a very onerous trust ; and, in addition, it seriously interfered with my own plans and arrangements. Nevertheless, under the circumstances, I did not feel at liberty to decline. A regard for the memory of a great and good man, and for those he left behind him, whom I hoped to benefit, and who, consequently, receive an interest in this work ; a sense of duty to the Church and to the public, and the hope of promoting the glory of God, and the interests of religion and philanthropy, were the motives, if I know my own heart, which induced me to engage in the undertaking.

Complaints have reached us from different parts of the country about the delay of this work, which render some explanation on our part necessary.

The reader is already aware that at Dr. Fisk's death there were scarcely any materials out of which to construct a biography. He ought to know, also, that what there were did not come into my hands until six months after Dr. Fisk's death. On examination, I found that I had not even then what would justify the undertaking. I used every exertion, by public advertisements and private applications, to supply the deficiency, but did not satisfactorily succeed. Hence I was obliged to undertake a journey to Vermont, and to Dr. Fisk's early fields of labour, in quest of information ; but this I could not do until the summer vacation of 1840. Hence I was not prepared to commence writing the work until August or September of that year, and then a great portion of what is now incorporated in it had not been received. It should be remembered that the materials had to be procured from every part of the country. Thus a great deal came to hand after I had got past the place to which it belonged. The discerning reader will easily see how all this increased the perplexity and labour of the biographer. Very considerable portions of the work had to be rewritten and remodelled.

Considering these things, and that the whole has been prepared for the press, and the proof-sheets corrected in about nineteen months, amid the indispensable duties of a laborious station, the candid reader will judge whether there has been any culpable tardiness in the execution of the work. The author is more apprehensive of blame on the opposite score.

One other point, perhaps, demands a passing word. It was sometimes said in Dr. Fisk's lifetime, that, by his friends, he was spoken of in terms of extravagant eulogy. To avoid this charge, his biographer has endeavoured to keep his mind and feelings in a subdued, impartial frame; instead of describing his subject, he has endeavoured, as far as possible, to present him to the reader in his own words and actions, confident that the highest eulogy is to show him as he really was; and, having thus taken all the care he could to draw out and fairly illustrate each distinctive feature, he has declined the task of formally summing up his character at the close of the volume. Such descriptions as he thought really necessary to give completeness to his sketch, he has preferred interspersing through the work. He trusts that this method will not prove unsatisfactory to his readers.

I cannot close this preface without returning my grateful acknowledgments to the numerous friends to whom I am indebted for papers, information, and counsel in the preparation of this work. Their assistance was indispensable. The work could not have been prepared without it. I would gladly render them my acknowledgments by name, but the number is too great to allow of mentioning all, and to name a few only might seem invidious. I must, therefore, content myself with this general expression of my gratitude.

The author's task is now done, how successfully is not for him to decide. Considering the character of the work, it

would, perhaps, be too much to expect that it should prove satisfactory to all ; but he may be allowed to observe, that any strictures that may be made upon it in the spirit of a liberal friendship, shall in a like spirit be received : and for the rest, he can only say that he has written in view of his responsibility to his Church, his conscience, and his God. As he has deeply felt his need, so he has earnestly sought the Divine guidance in the progress of his labours ; and, now that the work is closed, to the Divine blessing he commends it, in earnest hope and fervent prayers that it may be serviceable to the cause of truth and of spiritual Christianity.

Wesleyan University, April, 1842.

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L I F E
OF THE
R E V. W I L L B U R F I S K, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

Parentage.—Birth and Early Education.—Youthful Piety.—Academy at
Peacham.—Religious Declension.

IN a country where “nature, culture, and *grace*” issue the only patents of nobility, the subject of pedigree can never be one of great social importance. Nevertheless, such is the power of association, that, when an individual rises to distinction, we find ourselves spontaneously inquiring, What was his origin? Who were his progenitors? Nor is the inquiry, in a moral and philosophical point of view, entirely destitute of reason. Upon these things depend, in a good degree, the first elements of character, and the earliest incentives to excellence. Human virtue, it is true, is not necessarily traditive; yet we instinctively look for some correspondence between the race and the individual, between the sire and the son. We naturally expect a fair scion from an excellent stock. In no other point of view is the question of genealogy of any weight: for no earthly distinctions can ennoble the morally vile; while he that inherits qualities that dignify any name, may look down with indifference upon those adventitious distinctions that may belong alike to the worthy and the unworthy, to the good and the bad.

These remarks apply to the subject of this memoir. His ancestors were illustrious only for their virtues. He enjoyed few advantages that are not within reach of the great bulk of the middle class of people in the United States. He was, properly speaking, a self-made man. Yet his talents, his

virtues, his energy, and, above all, his deep and fervent piety, which purified his affections, sweetened his disposition, and harmonized all his faculties, raised him to an eminence, and secured him an influence, which very few attain. We trust that his example, by the blessing of God, will awaken in many hearts aspirations after similar excellence.

When the interest of a life consists, in any considerable degree, in its moral and intellectual aspects, parentage and early education are not unworthy our attention. These exert an important influence over the future man. The child is the man in embryo, morally and intellectually as well as physically; and whatever helps to mould the child is fraught with interest to the student of human character and destiny. This must be our excuse, if we need any, for entering with some particularity into the parentage and early education of our subject.

WILLBUR FISK was born at Brattleborough, in the State of Vermont, on the 31st day of August, 1792. His parents were Isaiah and Hannah Fisk. He was descended in both lines from that noble class of men who sought on the "wild New-England shore" "freedom to worship God." The first settlers in the paternal line were two brothers, named Benjamin and Samuel, who established themselves in Rhode Island. Family tradition says that the former was governor of the Colony of Connecticut; the latter, from whom our subject descended, was a practising physician. In that quaint but learned, and, in many respects, interesting work, *Mather's Magnalia*, mention is made of a Rev. John Fisk, who, in company with a younger brother, emigrated to the New World in 1637. He was followed by two other brothers. There is some ground for supposing that these were the above-named Benjamin and Samuel Fisk, and, if so, it identifies our subject with a very virtuous and worthy race. A strong family likeness, at any rate, exists between them. The father of Mr. Isaiah Fisk in his earlier life owned and commanded a coasting vessel, until the breaking out of the war of the Revolution rendered his occupation too precarious. He then sold his vessel, and bought lands in Guild-

ford, Vermont, the town* adjoining Brattleborough, where he ultimately settled his family.

Mrs. Hannah Fisk's maiden name was Bacon. Her grandfather Bacon came from England with his brother, the Rev. Jacob Bacon, who was pastor of the church at Plymouth, Massachusetts. Her mother's name was Willbur.† She was a lineal descendant of the Rev. Samuel Mann, first minister of the town of Wrentham, in connexion with which he is mentioned in Barber's Historical Collections of Massachusetts. She was married to Mr. Isaiah Fisk on the second of March, 1786.

Willbur, named after his maternal grandmother, was the second of three children, of whom the youngest, a boy, died in his fourth year, and the eldest, Mary, is married, and resides near her parents. From his birth he was a child of affliction, being troubled with a scrofulous complaint, which at three months old dried up, and left behind it that peculiar cough which continued with him ever after.

He exhibited great precocity of mind and aptitude at learning. A relative, who had the charge of his early education, informs me that "she always found him a very amiable, dutiful, vigilant scholar, always early to school and in his place. He never failed to get his lesson correctly and cheerfully, and was always kind and peaceable among his school-fellows." She never "knew him speak a disrespectful word to superiors, inferiors, or equals." It was also remarked that he was not like a child in his behaviour. His understanding, his turn of thought, and his conversation, were dignified beyond his years.

It was a blessing to be the son of such parents as Dr. Willbur Fisk's. We might feel some delicacy in saying much of them during their lifetime, but they have now attained an age when they can be but little affected by the voice of praise or censure. They have long accustomed themselves to consult the approbation of ONE whose favour is of infinitely greater moment than the approbation of a

* A town in New-England corresponds with what in some of the states is denominated a township.

† This is the proper mode of spelling the name.

fellow-mortal. They stand with their lamp trimmed and burning, ready, whenever called, to enter, without fear, into "the land of darkness and shadow of death."

By an unfortunate connexion in business in early life, Judge Fisk was stripped of his patrimony; but by industry and frugality he accumulated sufficient for the purchase of new land farther in the interior. He accordingly settled in Lyndon, Caledonia county, within about forty miles of the Canada line. In this county he has resided ever since, respected and beloved by all who know him. He has received repeated proofs of the confidence of his fellow-citizens. He has filled various important civil offices. For many years he was chief-justice of the County Court, when the office was more important than it is now under the revised Constitution. He was not less than seventeen years, at intervals, a member of the Legislature, and twice he was elected a member of the Council of Censors.* Besides these, he has filled various local offices, involving more care and responsibility than emolument. Yet he has remained comparatively poor, where many would have amassed a fortune. It was his maxim that no man ought to enrich himself on the spoils of the public: a maxim which, through life, he has carried to a romantic extreme.

Judge Fisk and his excellent wife are, like Zechariah and Elizabeth of old, "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless." They became early members of the Church of Christ, and carried the influence of their piety with them, like their worthy ancestors, into the wilderness. Springing from the

* This feature in civil polity is, I believe, peculiar to the State of Vermont. The Council of Censors is composed of thirteen members, chosen once in seven years by a general vote. Its province is to revise all the official acts of the legislative, executive, and judiciary departments during the past seven years, with power to send for persons, papers, and records. It can pass censures, order impeachments, and recommend the Legislature to repeal unconstitutional laws. It investigates, also, the mode of imposing and collecting the taxes. Its power lasts one year; but it can call a Convention, if deemed advisable, within two years after its session. Such a tribunal must be in the last degree important, and ought to be composed of men combining Grecian intelligence with no less than Roman integrity.—See *Natural and Civil History of Vermont*, by Samuel Williams, LL.D.; Walpole, New-Hampshire, 1794; p. 348, 349.

stock of the ancient Puritans, they inherited all their hardy and useful qualities. To these virtuous sons of New-England—the Scotland of America—we may apply Wordsworth's description of his hero's ancestors in the *Excursion*:

“ Pure livers were they all, austere and grave,
And fearing God ; the very children taught
Stern self-respect, a reverence for God's word,
And an habitual piety, maintained
With strictness scarcely known on *other* ground.”

Such were the forefathers of Dr. Fisk. The reader may perhaps be reminded of the Duke of Sully's remarks, in his *Memoirs*, on his own ancestry. “ Whoever has such domestic examples as these, cannot recall them too often to his memory to animate himself to follow them. Happy if, during the course of my life, my conduct may be such that * * * *they* disdain not to acknowledge me, nor I have occasion to blush that I am descended from them.”

Mrs. Fisk was very assiduous in impressing upon the minds of her children the great principles of Christianity. She took them early and constantly to church ; made it a particular business to read to them the Word of God ; required them to learn their catechism, and commit texts, hymns, and prayers to memory. She had the happy art, too, of rendering these things more a pleasure than a burden. According to their capacity, she was almost constantly stimulating them to thought and inquiry by her conversation with them. Both parents were exemplary in the observance of the Sabbath. They regarded it as a day strictly set apart for religious uses, and hence the time not spent in public worship was occupied in family instruction. They neither paid nor received calls or visits on the Sabbath day. Yet their piety was so mild and cheerful, and their household governed with such uniform consistency, that the Sabbath was far from being a dull or gloomy day.

From such a training the young Willbur naturally learned to respect religion. He was thoughtful and conscientious ; yet he gave ample evidence of the natural corruption of our moral powers. He was hasty, passionate, and self-willed. He was naturally of an ardent temperament, and, though generally mild and placable, yet at times he gave way to

strong temper. Some proofs of this are still reserved in memory by the family. Yet he was easily made sensible of his errors, and deeply repented them. "Often," he says, in a very brief sketch of his early life, "I have watered my pillow with my tears for the sins I had committed, and frequently have I feared to sleep lest I should awake in misery." This was when he was not more than four or five years of age.

But it was not until his eleventh year that there seemed to rest upon him any abiding religious influence. His mind was then very deeply impressed by the death of his little brother, to whom he was very tenderly attached. Standing by the side of the corpse, he said to his sister Mary, "How good God is to us! He has taken our little brother away, who needed no conversion; but he has given us time to repent."

His father, who recollects the circumstances perfectly well, informed me that his convictions of sin now became very deep, his faith in Christ was clear, and the change in his feelings great and obvious. He was soon after received on probation in the Methodist Episcopal Church, to which his mother had belonged for some time. His father, though a professor of religion, did not join this church for several years after.

The tendency of mind towards a common level is evident in piety. The individual is apt to catch the spirit of those around him, and rise or sink to the prevailing standard. Let the churches ponder this. It was favourable to Willbur's piety that the church he joined was composed of very deeply-devoted and active Christians. The standard of personal religion was high, and well adapted to sustain the elevated purposes of a young disciple. He became a striking example of youthful piety.

It was not very long after this period before our young friend gave indication of his future usefulness. His precocious talents were early brought into requisition, in a way for which no church affords such opportunity as our own. But there is some danger with us of carrying it to an injurious excess. He began early to pray in public, and to speak in

class-meetings and at love-feasts, and even to exhort after preaching, which was then generally in a schoolhouse or private dwelling. On these occasions the relation of his Christian feelings was often peculiarly affecting. His zeal, talents, and aptitude in speaking were such as deeply to impress the minds of all with an expectation of subsequent eminence.

But it is time to pay attention to the formation of our subject's mental habits. Piety has more influence than many are aware of on the development of the mental powers. After the period of which we have spoken, his mind appeared to expand very rapidly, and he manifested great eagerness in the acquisition of knowledge. He would frequently rise at three or four o'clock in the morning, that he might have time to pursue his studies before the family were up. When he went into the fields to work, it was his general practice to carry a book in his pocket wherewith to improve his leisure moments. It was often his lot to attend to the fire of a lime-kiln; and more than once he was so absorbed in his book as to let the fire go out. As it was some distance from the house, to save the time of going to dinner, he would sometimes open a potato-hill, and, washing the contents in a brook, roast them in the kiln for his meal. Thus he satisfied at once his physical and his intellectual appetite. Such little things would not be worth notice, only that in them we see the man in miniature.*

Young Fisk's early advantages, so far as schooling was concerned, were very limited. From the age of seven to sixteen he scarcely attended school altogether more than two or three years. This was with him afterward a subject of deep regret. In the little sketch of his early life already alluded to, he says, "Thus the best part of my time for literary instruction was lost: a loss which I shall always regret, as it can never be made up. I always consider these years of my life as little better than thrown away. It is true, du-

* Of the character of his reading at this time, some glimpse was incidentally afforded at a subsequent period. When it was proposed to introduce Smellie's *Philosophy of Natural History* into the University course of studies, Dr. Fisk remarked, "I first read that book while attending a lime-kiln on my father's farm."

ring these years I read a number of authors, which served to enlarge my ideas of men and things. But, as I had none to direct my studies, and as, from the scarcity of good books, I had but little opportunity of exercising even my own judgment in a choice, my reading was very desultory, and in many instances very unprofitable. Besides, during those years in which the mind is hastening to its maturity, and in which its movements and operations in future life are almost irresistibly influenced, my employments and course of reading were such as to scatter my thoughts, and induce a wandering habit of mind that I never have conquered, and probably never shall. This habit of mind is a lamentable evil. It greatly retards a man in his course of usefulness, and is almost an unconquerable obstruction to devotion itself. How little do parents and guardians realize the great injury the young committed to their care are sustaining while their minds are regulated by no fixed salutary rules, and their studies are directed to no salutary end! There are some geniuses, it is true, which shine with an almost supernatural light, unaided by regular culture; and their flights might have been retarded by a regular course of cultivation. But even these would probably, on the whole, have lost nothing. They would at times have coruscated less brilliantly, but they would have erred less frequently. They would have dazzled less occasionally, but they would have pleased and instructed more uniformly. And it is certain most minds need much regulating, restraining, and directing to render them as useful to themselves and others as they might be."

Yet it may be doubted if this be not too severe a judgment. We must not confine our notions of education entirely to the schoolroom. Much of the mental training, or, at least, development, takes place by the fireside, at the family table, in the field, and on the road. In short, mind is formed by its daily contact with the minds around it. Intelligence is infectious. You cannot live in the midst of it without catching a portion. Young Fisk enjoyed advantages at home. The ideas, views of things, and principles which he learned from his well-informed and thoughtful, though not highly-educated parents, were such as to awaken

thought and create a thirst for information. This made him set a higher value on his subsequent advantages, and, consequently, stimulated him to application.

Another particular had no little influence in shaping his mental character. I allude to natural scenery. His paternal dwelling is surrounded by objects which find a ready response in the reflective mind, especially when accompanied by great sensibility. The house is situated on a considerable eminence, overlooking a wide extent of country. Around it the tops of the hills are seen peering one above another, like the caps of the ocean billows in a gale; while at the distance of forty miles are discerned the summits of the White Mountains of New-Hampshire, soaring majestically till their heads are lost in the clouds. There is ample evidence that young Willbur was deeply sensible of the beauty and sublimity of the Creator's works. He would wander off by himself for hours, traversing the woods, climbing the hills, or tracing the windings of the rivulet. There is one spot on the farm which was a favourite resort. It is the summit of a sloping hill, perhaps two hundred feet high, terminating on one side precipitously, and crested with a lovely grove. Here he has sometimes been seen, unknown to himself, lost in thought, or engaged deeply in soliloquy.

"In such communion not from terror free,
While yet a child, and long before his time,
He had perceived the presence and the power
Of greatness; and deep feelings had impressed
Great objects on his mind, with portraiture
And colour so distinct, that on his mind
They lay like substances, and seemed
To haunt the bodily sense."—*The Excursion*.

In the manner we have indicated, our subject passed along "life's low vale" until he reached his seventeenth year. It was now apparent, from the weakness of his constitution, that he was ill adapted to the business of a farmer, in a state of society where the farmer must depend chiefly on his own hands for the tillage of his grounds. Besides, his eager thirst for knowledge was such as very much to disqualify him for laborious employments, and rendered him dissatisfied with his situation. Hence, in the winter of 1808, '9,

his father sent him for three months to the county grammar-school at Peacham, about twenty miles from Lyndon. During this period, he observes, in the manuscript before referred to, "I gained a tolerable knowledge of English grammar and vulgar arithmetic, with which I was before but little acquainted. I then returned to my former employment of cultivating the soil, and had no more opportunities to attend to my studies, save what I enjoyed in my intervals of labour, till the autumn of 1810, when I again visited the grammar-school, where I remained about six weeks, and then took charge of a district school to instruct for the winter."

He had now tasted the sweets of knowledge, and he pined for a deeper draught. He thus proceeds: "Ever since I was at the grammar-school the first time, I was more dissatisfied and uneasy than before. I had got a keener relish for study, had seen many fitting for the University, and had learned at least some of the names of the sciences; and I had an ardent desire to give up all for this pursuit. But my father's circumstances were such as would not authorize him to undertake my support through a course of study. However, I found that many young men without property made shift to support themselves mostly by their own exertions; and having, by much entreaty, gained my father's consent to make the attempt, I began my Latin grammar in May, 1811." If I am correctly informed, though it is not mentioned in his hasty sketch, he returned now to the grammar-school, and completed his preparation for college.

When young Fisk first went to Peacham, he excited no little remark by the gravity and dignity of his carriage, so uncommon in a youth of seventeen. He then struck every one as unusually conscientious and devoted. But, unhappily for himself, this feature of his character did not long continue. Under any circumstances, a course of education, by developing faculties before unknown to their possessor, and opening up views to which the mind was before a stranger, presents peculiar temptations to the humility and simplicity of a spiritual Christian. And this temptation must necessarily be greater when the dominant influence of a school is

unfavourable to an evangelical temper. This was the case at Peacham. Unfortunately, the state of religion in the town was extremely low, and religious influence in the school was unknown. The feelings appealed to were all worldly. Ambition, rivalry, and love of applause were the governing impulses; and by degrees young Fisk caught the contagion, relaxed from his Christian spirit, and became as worldly and ambitious as his associates.

There was at this time a good share of talent in the school, and the spirit of rivalry ran high. As usual, the school was divided into two parties, scholastic and political. By one of these young Fisk was looked up to as leader, while Thaddeus Stevens, since so well known in the political circles in Pennsylvania, stood in the same relation to the other. These two were, consequently, often pitted against each other, and some stories are still told in the neighbourhood illustrative of their respective talents and character. They both realized the anticipations of their friends, only that young Fisk showed at that period a warmth of temper and a desire of distinction which made his subsequent coolness and self-renunciation more observable.

Though liable at times to strong excitement, he was generally remarkable for calm dignity and self-possession. Prudence was another striking feature in his character at this time; and with this was combined a readiness and tact, that, with a feebler sense of rectitude, would have degenerated into cunning and intrigue. He was, likewise, very prompt and ready in rejoinder. No emergency seemed to surprise him, or find him off his guard; and, withal, he had a determined self-will, bordering upon obstinacy. Once or twice he came into contact with the trustees; and it was amusing to a spectator to see how he would keep his ground and hold them at bay, until, unable to gain an advantage over him, they would intrench themselves behind their official dignity, and silence him when they could not convince.

He entered a good deal into society while at Peacham. Among the young people he was much sought after, was considered an excellent companion, entered with zest into their various amusements, and was always characterized by a vein of sly humour and fun.

During this whole period his piety declined more and more, until he lost all claim to spirituality. But he never fell into gross sin, nor even lost the fear of God. He even maintained some of his forms of devotion, and never gave up secret prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures. Yet he was painfully conscious of a heart alienated from God, and dead to true religious feelings. Hence, when he was subsequently restored to his former enjoyment in piety, and even after he had entered the ministry, he could not visit Peacham without the most poignant sensations of grief and shame. He remained a stranger to spiritual religion until some time after he completed his collegiate career.

In the month of August, 1812, young Fisk entered the sophomore class in the University of Vermont. Of his residence there we have but little knowledge, except what is gained from his college exercises and a few private letters. One of the latter, to his sister Mary, we insert, to show his turn of mind and the warmth of his affections.

Burlington, May 16th, 1813.

"DEAR SISTER, ~

"This is one of those pleasant mornings so often described by poets and writers of romances, in which nature seems to have united all her beauties. The grove has, in part, assumed its green summer dress; the grass of the pasture already invites the grazing herds; and the germinating fruit-trees unfold their promising blossoms. The sun, 'with his golden beams,' 'looks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill;' while the feathered songsters of the grove, warmed by his influence, are already 'whistling their wild notes to the wind.' The tented field below is covered with patriots, the avengers of our country's wrongs; the placid lake beyond them exhibits a pleasing and majestic scene, while scarcely a zephyr ruffles its surface. On the farther shore is seen the cultivated farm and retired dwelling of the York cottagers; beyond the whole, the sensible horizon closes down upon a long range of mountains, and terminates the delightful prospect. Such an enchanting scene strikes me, I know not how, with a feeling at once agreeable and gloomy. 'It is

like the memory of joys that are past, pleasing and mournful to the soul.' It calls to my mind the happy hours which you and I, my dear sister, have enjoyed together ; when, in our innocent and childish pastimes, we have spent ' the livelong day ' in wandering, unrestrained, over the meadows and through the groves, gathering at our leisure the wild flowers which sprung up around us in spontaneous profusion. With such mingled emotions, I look to find one with whom I may converse, whose feelings are similar to my own. I look in vain. I then am ready to curse my fates which have separated me from you : for, knowing your natural disposition, your love of rural scenes, I am sensible that our feelings would join in unison. But, since we are at a distance from each other, when to meet again is uncertain, I improve this only method which we have of conversing with each other. Separation of friends and relatives has the good effect of uniting them more closely together. Did we always enjoy each other's company, we should not know how to appreciate its worth. After an absence of several months or years, how pleasing is the first interview with our friends ! All our former affection is increased. This pleasure I anticipate when I shall return once more to ' Lyndon's hills.' The time, however, looks at a considerable distance. Perhaps it will not be until the foliage which now begins to deck the grove shall have fallen to the ground, nipped by chill November's frost. However this may be, you shall frequently hear from me. It is entirely owing to hurry of study that I have not written to you before. Besides our usual studies, I have written a funeral oration since I came here, on the death of our classmate, Mr. Gilbert. This for a number of weeks occupied my spare hours. And, since I am writing to a sister, suffer me to observe, that it was said, before the day on which that oration was pronounced, an audience in Burlington was never known to weep ; but on that day many a fair lady's cheek was wet with tears. Think not I am an egotist, for I should not have written thus to any other person. Our appointments for Commencement are given out.* The part

* There was an exhibition of the junior class on the evening before Commencement, in which he had a part.

I have is a poem!! No doubt you will be surprised at this, but I presume not more than I was. What could induce the authorities to think me a poet, I know not. You know I sometimes dabble in rhyme, but you very well know also that I am not enough of a poet to exhibit my productions on the stage. For my own part, I feel very much embarrassed with my appointment. But there is no reprieve. I must do as well as I can. If I am hissed at, it will be no more than I expect, or at least fear. I should be very happy if you could *loan* me your poetical genius until Commencement. However, as I shall not have a return from you soon enough, I must use my own—if I have any.

"You will not, I suppose, expect me to write much concerning politics to you. What are called politics at present are so much handled by every one, that I think it hardly worth while to fill up a letter with them. We have only to take up a newspaper, and we shall see enough of them on every page. Therefore, suffice it to say, I am still a friend to my country, to 'free trade and no impressment.'

"You have doubtless heard of the capture of Little York. That, to be sure, is agreeable news; but the loss of General Pike in a great measure allays the joy of victory. It is thought here that he was one of the best officers in the service. He was born and educated in the army. He was enthusiastically brave, but his bravery was governed by his prudence and military skill."

Of his turn of mind and prevalent tastes at this time, some idea may be formed from a list of the nine muses and the annexed note found in his handwriting:

"THE NINE MUSES.

Melpomene	.	.	The Tragic.
Thalia	.	.	The Comic.
Erato	.	.	The Lyric.
Terpsichore	.	.	Presided over Dancing.
Clio	.	.	Presided over History.
Euterpe	.	.	Presided over Music.
Calliope	.	.	Eloquence and Heroic Poetry.
Polyhymnia	.	.	Singing and Rhetoric.
Urania	.	.	Philosophy and Astronomy.

"If any of the within-named ladies will condescend to initiate me into any one branch of the arts, or any of the sciences which they patronise and preside over, I pledge myself, as far as my duty to my God and my fellow-beings will permit, to be her humble admirer and devotee all my life.

W. FISK."

And, accordingly, he devoted himself to them all with great assiduity, except Terpsichore and Thalia, though Clio, Calliope, Polyhymnia, and Urania were most auspicious to his vows.

The following paper also shows that he was forming lofty aims for future attainments. It is dated 1813 :

REMARKS ON THE LIFE OF FRANKLIN.

Practices and Principles worthy of Imitation.

"First. His unremitting diligence in everything he undertook. What more strongly augurs a great man than to see a person, while young, devoting almost every moment of his spare hours to study, and, when employed in his calling, pursuing his occupation faithfully and industriously ?

"Secondly. His care to improve his style. This ought to be one of the first objects of a young man who is hoping to rise to any degree of eminence and usefulness in life.

"Thirdly. His strict regard to his regimen. This, as he himself relates, contributed much, not only to the preservation of his health, but also to the clearness of his ideas.

"Fourthly. His frugality and economy in managing his pecuniary affairs.

"Fifthly. His benevolence to his friends. This, however, seems not worthy of imitation to the extent he practised it. We ought, indeed, to be always benevolent to our friends, but we ought carefully to determine that they are worthy of our beneficence. In this respect Franklin seems not to have been sufficiently cautious, as he frequently bestowed his favours upon the ungrateful and the undeserving ; but, as it arose from a good heart, it ought to be classed among his virtues.

"Sixthly. His benevolence to all mankind. This is a

noble principle. Whenever he saw a person in want, his purse was always open for their assistance ; and not only his purse, but his talents, were at their service. His various publications, if attended to by the poor, would really place them in the high ' way to wealth.' Under this head should be mentioned his wish to assist young tradesmen just commencing business, for which purpose he left by his testament two thousand dollars, to be loaned to young tradesmen at five per centum.

"Seventhly. His detestation of arbitrary power. This excellent principle of Franklin's was admirably calculated to recommend him to his countrymen, and led the way for him to manifest one of his most noble and praiseworthy principles, which was,

"Eighthly. His patriotism. Franklin's was a heart too much the seat of every virtue not to be warmed by a love of country. This appeared in every public act of his life. To serve his country, he quitted the private walks of life, and those literary pursuits by which he immortalized his name. His influence and talents, which were very great, were for a series of years wholly devoted to the interest of his country. And so successful were his exertions, that, so long as the love of liberty and independence animates the bosoms of Americans, the name of Franklin will be revered."

The instruction at the University of Vermont was suspended in 1813 by the clangour of war. A division of the northern army, on going into winter-quarters, found it convenient to use the buildings of the University for barracks, making "the peaceful votaries of Minerva give way to the noisy sons of Mars." Compelled to seek another asylum, our subject would have entered Middlebury College ; but, on applying to Dr. Davis, president of this institution, he was told that he could not expect to enter in the same standing at Middlebury that he had held in Burlington. Indignant at this summary judgment without examination, and not relishing the reflection upon a sister college, he left Middlebury, and entered Brown University, at Providence, Rhode Island. This, however, was not until the summer of 1814.

For the following sketch of young Fisk's character at this period, I am indebted to the Rev. George Taft, rector of the Protestant Episcopal Church at North Providence, R. I. :

" North Providence, August 10, 1840.

"PROFESSOR HOLDICH—REV. AND DEAR SIR,

" You request of me my recollections of the late Dr. Fisk, president of the Wesleyan University, Middletown, Conn., to be used in a Memoir of his Life. Your request imposes upon me a pleasant and a painful duty : pleasant, because it leads me to review the happy days I have spent with him ; painful, because those days are gone, never to return. I will attempt its performance.

" Fisk was my classmate in Brown University. He came among us during our junior year, and I think it was in the spring term. He had previously been a member of the University of Vermont, which was broken up in consequence of its being in or near the seat of the late war between this country and Great Britain.

" I was the first with whom he became acquainted in the University. Our acquaintance soon ripened into a cordial friendship, which grew stronger and stronger, until we separated on the day we graduated. Our intercourse was most confiding. Removing every disguise, we disclosed our minds to each other. Since our Commencement we have had but few personal interviews.

" I take no credit to myself for becoming attached to him. It would augur a strange obliquity in a man's moral nature to know and not to be attached to him. The lover of virtue must have been an admirer of him.

" My remarks must be confined to his college life. But here a difficulty presents itself. It is difficult to point out one section of the nocturnal sidereal firmament more resplendent than another. So it is difficult to point out the more brilliant parts of his collegiate life, where all was brilliant. He appeared advantageously in every branch of learning taught in the University. There might, perhaps, have been one who excelled him in the mathematics, and another in the learned languages ; but there was no one so distinguish-

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ed in every department of literature and science. He was a universal, and yet not a superficial scholar. I am persuaded that, if he had directed all the energies of his mind to any one art or science, he would have rivalled the mighty masters of any age.

"If he was more distinguished in one department of study than another, it was the belles-lettres. He revelled and luxuriated in Kaimes's Elements of Criticism. I remember, however, that he objected to this work the paucity of Scriptural illustrations. The objection is a valid one.

"He possessed a nicely-balanced mind. All its faculties were called forth and cultivated. No one was nurtured to the neglect or injury of another. His imagination, luxuriant, and naturally, perhaps, having the ascendancy over the other attributes of his mind, was subjected to a sound and discriminating judgment, and an elegant and cultivated taste.

"He distinguished accurately between useful and useless knowledge. His mind was not lumbered up with monkish learning. All his scientific and literary acquisitions were practical, and designed to bless mankind.

"His was one of those rare minds that would powerfully and lastingly impress those it came in contact with; and I doubt not but that, in his high office of President of the Wesleyan University, he has fixed his image and superscription upon many of the young gentlemen who have resorted thither for education. It has been well remarked by some one, that the teacher who does not leave his mark upon his pupils is not worthy of his office.

"As a debater or extemporaneous speaker, he had no equal in the class. He possessed the '*copia fandi*' in an eminent degree. He poured forth a stream of rich and varied thought, clothed in appropriate and beautiful language.

"His talent for description was extraordinary. In conversation and in composition, he has described an object so true to the original, that I have had an idea of it as vividly distinct as though it had been delineated on canvass before me by the pencil of some mighty master of the graphic art. Can language do more than this?

"He had a fine taste for poetry. He repeated passages

to good effect. His recitations were generally of the pathetic character. Sure, never till my latest breath shall I forget his repeating Montgomery's Grave. It was on one of New-England's most beautiful autumnal days. The yellow leaf was falling. A mild southwest wind was sighing among the trees. His pathetic tones seem almost to be now ringing in my ears. We mingled our tears as we spoke of the grave. His mind appeared slightly tinged with melancholy.

"He sometimes tried his hand at original poetry. I remember that, for a college exercise in composition, he turned into metre Mrs. Barbauld's prose hymn, beginning with, 'Child of mortality, whence comest thou?' and when he read it before the class, we listened to it with pleasure. This was high praise, for we knew the original. That ripe scholar, the late Rev. Mr. Buckminster, of Boston, said he would rather be the author of Mrs. Barbauld's Hymns than of Newton's Principia.

"During our senior year, six of our class associated ourselves together, and agreed to write and publish weekly in the Rhode Island American (the most ably conducted paper in the state) pieces after the manner of the British essayists. We were all panting to be Spectators, and Ramblers, and Adventurers, but had not the courage to adopt the style. We met in grave debate about a name for our lucubrations, and finally agreed upon that of Trifler. Our title was unpretending, and we meant, if we fell below Addison and Johnson, it should be our protection. Fisk wrote a piece on *Quid Nuncs*. It was much admired at the time, and, if I remember right, it was copied into other papers.

"It was the practice in the college in our time, if a death occurred in either the freshman or sophomore class, for the classmates of the deceased to select one from the senior class to pronounce a funeral eulogy on the occasion. During our senior year a death took place in the sophomore class, and Fisk was unanimously chosen to notice the event in a funeral oration. This is evidence of the estimation in which he was held by the lower classes.

"These are some of my reminiscences of Fisk's college life. They are reminiscences at the end of many long years.

To some they may not be spirit-stirring enough. Such must be informed that the life of the secluded student does not afford an opportunity for thrilling incident. That must be sought in the life of the soldier and mariner.

"I have not attempted a delineation of his character. That would require his own graphic pen; and who is there that wields such a pen? All that I have endeavoured to do is to state a few isolated facts, which may be of service to his biographer in writing the history of his mind.

"Take him for all in all, Fisk was undoubtedly the brightest light in my class. It is painful to reflect that that light is gone out in the fulness of its meridian splendour. I thank God it shone so long, and that so many enjoyed and walked in it.

"I had fondly cherished the hope of meeting him, on some future day, in his academic halls and learned shades, and of placing under his care a beloved son, to be trained up in good morals and sound learning. This hope is disappointed. It remains for me to be prepared to meet him in heaven, and to hold up his example before my boy for his imitation. I know of no one I would sooner have him imitate than Dr. Fisk. If God would give me such a son, I would bless him, and ask no more."

In addition to his collegiate studies, Mr. Fisk availed himself of whatever other means of improvement were within his reach. He read a good deal, and with judgment. He was particularly fond of Burke, Addison, and Shakspeare. He also acknowledged himself under no small obligation to Johnson, though he never imitated his cumbrous and unwieldy style. He turned his attention also to natural and international law, and read Vattel and Burlamaqui. He made himself familiar with our chief masters of the lyre, especially Milton, Young, Beattie, and Scott. He was charmed with Moore, but called him a "golden bait;" and of Byron's powers he was deeply sensible, but dreaded the pernicious tendency of his writings. He also, as far as possible, availed himself of living aids, particularly in elocution. The bar of Rhode Island sustained at that time a high repu-

tation for oratorical talent. The Hon. James Burrill, with David Howell, A. Robbins, B. Hazzard, Esqrs., and the late Hon. Tristram Burgess, were the stars of chief magnitude. He omitted no opportunity of hearing these gentlemen, and for this purpose not unfrequently sat up most of the night to get his lessons.

During this period he kept up no profession of religion, and identified himself with no church. He was fond of society, with which he mingled as much as his duties would allow, occasionally attending places of fashionable amusement. He sometimes went where they profess to "hold the mirror up to nature," and discovered, from observation more than experience, that they rather hold out a pleasing bait "to allure the young and unwary into vicious practices."

Having completed his course, he received from his instructors a sufficient token of their regard in having a distinguished part assigned him for the Commencement exercises. This was the more grateful to his feelings after the repulse he had met with at Middlebury. He was graduated in August, 1815.

CHAPTER II.

Studies Law.—Mental Conflict, and Views of the Ministry.—Residence in Maryland.—Sickness.—Returns Home.—Reclaimed.—Called to Preach.—Ministerial Qualifications.

THE time had now arrived when it was necessary for Mr. Fisk to determine in what manner he would employ his talents and education. Next to marriage, the choice of a profession is the most important incident in the secular history of a human being, and exercises the greatest influence over his subsequent character and destiny. The decision of this question cost him no little thought and anxiety. When he commenced his course of study, his parents entertained a hope that he would devote himself to the sacred office. His own views were similar. Yet he was not educated for this specific object. He had not a sufficient assurance that he was "inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon him the office of the ministry in the Church of Jesus Christ." In pursuing his education, therefore, he followed what he and his parents believed to be present duty, trusting that he should be ready to obey the call of God, whatever it might be. But we have already seen how much he declined in religious feeling during this period, and, in consequence, his convictions of duty to preach the Gospel very much abated. Indeed, he had for some time entertained serious thoughts of qualifying himself for a statesman. His turn of mind and objects of study while in college, as we have seen, were governed by this intention. Yet, as the period approached when he must make his selection, he had many misgivings and painfully conflicting impulses. The necessity of coming to a decision brought his thoughts into contact with a subject which had long been painful to him. The thought of what he had been, compared with what he now was, racked him with agony; and while his conscience pointed out the path of duty, he was deeply conscious of a want of spiritual qualification; and, what was worse, religion had

been so long alien to his feelings, that he felt no disposition to take the proper steps for the improvement of his condition. In this painful state he knew not what to do. He felt a great repugnance to the professions both of law and medicine, so that at one time he entertained serious thoughts of entering into mercantile business, and wrote to a friend for his advice upon the subject. Finally, however, having received a favourable offer from the Hon. Isaac Fletcher, who had already attained considerable distinction in his profession, he entered into his office in Lyndon, and commenced the study of the law. He applied himself to his legal studies with great assiduity, and immediately commenced laying a foundation, deep and broad, for future usefulness. His industry was indefatigable, and his perseverance unrelaxing. With such force of character acting with his talents and acquirements, he would no doubt have attained singular eminence in his profession; for it was his uniform practice, when he entered upon any course, to throw his whole heart into it.

Meantime, his excellent parents felt great solicitude for him. His father's views may be seen from a passage in a letter in answer to his son's inquiries of him, while in college, concerning the choice of his profession. He tells him that he had had a secret hope that his religious emotions would be enkindled anew, and that he "would feel that wo that St. Paul speaks of if he preached not the Gospel."—(1 Cor., ix., 16.) And his pious mother observed to me while speaking on this subject, "While Willbur was aiming at becoming a distinguished statesman, I was all the time praying that he might be made a minister." Thus, through conflicting influences, he pursued for a time his thorny way.

But, though he was now pleasantly situated, and had flattering prospects before him, his mind was ill at ease. In hope of finding relief, he wrote to his friend and recent classmate, Mr. Taft, stating his repugnance to the law, and relating his exercises respecting the ministry. Thus he writes:

"I still look to the ministry as the best situation for usefulness to myself and others. Usefulness to myself, not in a

pecuniary point of view, for divines in this country have no rich glebes and fat livings to support them; but I consider it as the most probable means of securing my present and future happiness. Naturally proud, fond of the amusements, follies, and honours of the world, it is almost impossible for me to mingle with the multitude in any worldly employment without drinking into their spirit and joining in their forbidden pleasures. I know that I am unqualified for the important and sacred duties of a minister of the Gospel. But there is a Being who can qualify me for the situation; and if it is a station I ought to stand in, I am confident He will qualify me for it. If I conclude to study Divinity, the next question will be, which of the numerous denominations professing the Christian religion shall I take license under? The Episcopal Church is uppermost in my mind; and as I learn you have entered that order, I know of no one to whom I could apply for information concerning that church with a better prospect of receiving a candid and judicious answer than to yourself. I wish, therefore, you would give me what information you can respecting the Episcopal Church, in some or all of the following points: How long must a person study before he can commence preaching? What would be the cost to fit a person for the pulpit? Where and how could one in low pecuniary circumstances best pursue his preparatory studies? What openings are there in the Church for novices in the profession? What encouragement do ministers of that order meet with? This last question may perhaps induce you to think that I wish to obtain the priest's office to secure my bread; but it is not so; for this might be secured with much greater certainty, and in greater abundance, by the profession of Law than Divinity. I wish for a living in the world with the rest of my fellows. It is all that I expect." From a letter he wrote about the same time to his favourite aunt, Mrs. Palmer, of Brattleborough, we gain a farther insight into his feelings. She had expressed a hope that the ministry would be his choice. He gives his reasons for deciding otherwise. They are want of religious qualification, and the insufficiency of the remuneration to enable him to aid his parents and sister as he wished.

The reader will see by the above extract the power which conscience retained over him, and will sympathize with him in the distressing strait into which he was brought. At the same time, he will not fail to observe that his views were far from being correct. His was not the spirit that cried, "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is me if I preach not the Gospel." It was a prudential matter. The choice was to be first, and the qualifications were to come afterward; which is always a dangerous experiment, since it is unscriptural, and unauthorized of Heaven. Nor, though he desired to enter the ministry, did he base his inquiries on the single ground appropriate to such a purpose. The question was not, Which church possesses most of the "mind that was in Christ," and comes nearest to the scriptural standard in doctrine and discipline? In which church can I do most to honour God and save immortal souls? But there were many considerations having but a remote connexion with ministerial obligation. Though conscience preponderated, yet his views and aims were mixed. But pure, simple, unmixed motives are indispensable to the integrity of the Christian minister. It needs a "single eye" in order to have "the whole body full of light." There is fearful weight in the words of a powerful writer of the age, "How little do we consider the infinite mischief we occasion when we indulge SMALL MOTIVES in matters of religion."* The words ought to be stamped in letters of living light on every Christian heart. It is utterly a fault to make the selection of a church, and especially the choice of the ministry, turn upon any considerations other than those strictly appropriate to holy purposes. Especially in the ministry does this consultation of minor interests tend to degrade it from its legitimate elevation, and render it essentially secular and time-serving. The primary object is then subjected to secondary or tertiary. The claims of immortality must wait the bidding of mundane interests and convenience; whereas it is one of the first lessons of the New Testament to subordinate every claim, however endearing or imperious, to the claims of Heaven; for "he that loveth father or mother more than

* Saturday Evening: "The Church and the World."

me is not worthy of me," and no earthly claims are greater than those of consanguinity. These views are abundantly sustained by the history of our subject. As soon as his own soul was restored to a healthful religious condition, the point was settled. His mind vacillated, and was dissatisfied so long as it was under the power of conflicting motives. When once he had learned to make all motives subordinate to the grand aim, his solicitude was at an end; he had no farther anxieties upon that subject.

Though he still pursued the study of the law with interest and satisfaction, he could not reconcile himself to the practice. Blackstone and Vattel were far pleasanter than Chitty or Espinasse; but it did not accord with his circumstances to make reading law a mere luxury. Moreover, his college course had involved him and his father in expenses, which made it advisable to turn his education to immediate profit. Hence, on receiving about this time, through President Messer, of Brown University, what he considered an advantageous offer, he determined to relinquish his present situation, though he did not yet fully decide on abandoning his intended profession; indeed, he continued to read law for some time afterward.

We next find him in the family of Colonel Ridgely, near Baltimore, employed as a private tutor. Many would have thought his situation here very eligible; but he was not happy. Though treated with great politeness and attention, in a wealthy, elegant, and hospitable family, everything reminded him that he was a stranger. His disposition was naturally so affectionate, that he could hardly exist but in an atmosphere of love and friendship. Without these, mere courtesy and empty compliment were to him as the snows of Spitzbergen to a tropical plant. Writing to his intimate friend and townsman, the late Hon. Benjamin F. Deming, he says, "My mind and disposition are such that I must have some attachments, or, like the unsupported vine, I sink to the earth; and, to continue the figure, if there is nothing near to which my affections can attach themselves, like the tendrils of the vine, they stretch forth to a distance, and twine around the first object that will support them." Few

states of the mind are more painful than that of conscious sensibility without appropriate objects. This pain was no doubt increased by the fact that he had lost the enjoyments of true piety. That contraction of the sensibilities which takes place under the withdrawal of religious influence occasions a fearful stagnation of interest, unfavourable to even amiability. Few states are more distressing.

“The keenest pangs the wretched find,
Are pleasures to the dreary void,
The leafless desert of the mind,
The waste of feelings unemployed.”—BYRON.—*The Giaour*.

Much of his leisure time at Oaklands (the name of Colonel Ridgely's seat) was spent alone, and in the colonel's well-stored library. One effect of his seclusion was that he was led to commune much with his own heart. By this means the impressions of his early life were renewed, though without entirely regaining their ascendancy. His feelings are laid open, at this period, in his letters to his friends. While at Brown University he had formed an acquaintance with Miss Peck, whose image followed him in his banishment, and for whom friendship ripened into a tenderer affection. She is now his desolate and mourning widow. His correspondence with her tended greatly to re-awaken and confirm his religious feelings, and by her suggestions the subject of the ministry was brought strongly before him. His mind, however, was not settled, either as to his personal piety or what church he should select. His correspondent recommended to him Faber on the Spirit for the former, and Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity and the Christian Observer for the other. She was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

During all this period Mr. Fisk was in a very precarious state of health. The reader will not have forgotten the cough which had troubled him from infancy. Since the commencement of his collegiate course he had had two serious attacks of illness, one at Burlington, and another at Providence. And now, in the month of March, a violent cold developed alarming pulmonary symptoms, and ultimately produced a copious hemorrhage from the lungs.

But a merciful Providence restored him from, apparently, the brink of the grave. By the advice of his physicians, he now gave up his situation as a teacher, and returned to his native climate. What was more trying to him, was the opinion of his medical advisers, that he would not be able to pursue any profession that would require much exercise of the vocal organs. Thus his cherished hopes and ambitious projects appeared annihilated, and his education almost thrown away; but Providence had other ends in view.

He left Maryland on the 18th May, 1817, returning home by way of New-York, Albany, and the lakes to Burlington. Here he had farther trials awaiting him. God, who "correcteth man for his iniquities," had yet again to use the rod to prepare him for his proper destination. At Burlington he had a renewed hemorrhage. He lay at the hotel, where he was carefully nursed by his friends, and especially by his townsman, George Cahoon, Esq., then a student in the University, who left his studies and devoted himself almost exclusively to the invalid. His case was very alarming, insomuch that for a time little hope was entertained of his recovery. The benevolent inn-keeper was distressed at the thought of a young gentleman dying at his house, far from his friends, and without any one to ascertain his prospects on entering the world of spirits. He undertook the office of his spiritual adviser, and, on inquiring into his state of mind, received from his guest an assurance that he was willing to die. But the question touched him to the quick. He felt that his willingness to die arose, not from any assurance of his interest in the Saviour, but only from disappointment and dissatisfaction in life. The question was felt more deeply, because the questioner should rather have been his pupil than his instructor. He was not a professor of religion, though a well-informed son of an officer in the Congregational Church. This incident produced in our subject "great searchings of heart," and wrung from him the deep groans of an agonized spirit. As soon as he was able to travel, his father, having been informed of his situation, came and conveyed him home, where he arrived on the 18th June, just one month after leaving Baltimore.

On returning to Lyndon a new scene of things awaited him. The place was at that period favoured, under the ministry of the Rev. Phineas Peck, of the Methodist Church, with a remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Young and old, rich and poor, learned and unlearned, were subjects of the work. Several of Mr. Fisk's personal friends were among the number; among others, the late Hon. Benjamin F. Deming, and Mr., now the Rev. C. D. Cahoon. The influence that pervaded the community was exceedingly powerful, so that, as was supposed, one fifth of the inhabitants professed justifying faith in Christ. Mr. Fisk had not been long at home before his mind was deeply affected, and all the associations of his early days returned with greatly augmented power. His distress of mind at first was very deep. "Never," says the Rev. Mr. Cahoon, "shall I forget his sorrowful countenance, and the tears he shed while seeking restoration to the favour of Him whose Spirit he had so long grieved. No, never; for the impression is as vivid in my mind almost as it was when I saw the tears flowing down his emaciated cheeks."

In this state of mind, though unknown to many, he continued several days. One Sabbath evening he remained, after public service, at a conference-meeting. It was a time of great interest. After many had risen to speak, to the surprise of all arose young Mr. Fisk. He commenced in a tremulous voice. He confessed his dereliction from early principles and purposes, and avowed his determination to return to Him "from whom he had deeply revolted," and finally announced his belief that God for Christ's sake had blotted out his sins, and again received him into favour. The effect was electric. All felt an interest in him; and to see him, a young gentleman of interesting appearance, engaging manners, finished education, blighted hopes, in delicate health, now professing anew the feelings to which he had long been a stranger, was highly exciting. He spoke himself with intense emotion. Tears and sobs choked his utterance; but every broken sentence vibrated upon the chords of some sympathizing bosom. A sensation pervaded the assembly that scarcely left a dry eye in the house. Tears, sobs, and

exclamations of thankful joy were heard in every direction. He was now filled anew "with peace and joy in believing;" for he had heard the voice that had cried to him in various painful dispensations, "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings;" and he had said, "Behold, we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God." And now the Lord healed his backslidings, and loved him freely.

As soon as Mr. Fisk had entered into the "liberty of the sons of God," he began to exert himself for the good of others. He spent as much of his time as his strength would permit in attending religious meetings and visiting the awakened, and on every side the inquiry was heard, "What shall I do to be saved?" It is in this way that Methodist ministers have ever been trained for active usefulness in their vocation. By coming into close contact with the minds of the people, conversing much with them in their ordinary language, and ascertaining their thoughts, wants, and feelings, they were furnished with an abundant stock of ideas upon the most important topics, and topics, too, the most interesting to those who look upon the minister as an agent of their salvation. And be it remembered, however important academic or theological training may be to make an "able minister of the New Testament," yet he will be of little practical utility in the great business of Christianity without an adequate training in this school of experience. How, otherwise, can he learn to preach to the understandings and feelings of the populace? He may study books and preach learned dissertations, but he will produce in his hearers but little of the fruits of holiness.

It was now that he felt a renewed conviction of duty to preach the Gospel. But the elements of this feeling were different from what he had felt before he went to Maryland. Now it sprang from a simple and intense love for souls. "The love of Christ constrained" him. This was his animating impulse, the spring of his duties. Yet he was far from making up his mind instantaneously or rashly. He consulted his health; he inquired with much prayer what was the will of Heaven; but his mind ultimately settled down into the conviction that it was his duty to enter the

ministry in the church in whose bosom he had been reared, and by whose agency he had been reclaimed. But to come to this determination twenty years ago required rather more decision of character than it would at present, and a great deal more in a person of Mr. Fisk's education and advantages than in many others. The same external action, though designated by one name, does not always involve the same internal elements. It depends on the nature and force of conflicting motives, and you can estimate these only when you fully understand the mind of the actor. For Peter the fisherman, and the learned, elegant, and accomplished pupil of Gamaliel, to become apostles of the humble Nazarene, involved very different considerations. In all such cases, in estimating the moral force exhibited, it ought not to be forgotten that the compass of motives is in the ratio of the amount of mind.*

Moreover, the step he contemplated came into collision with some of the tenderest and strongest feelings of the heart. Miss Peck, to whom he was betrothed, was a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and knew but little of the economy of Methodism. She was of a slender constitution, and had been very delicately brought up. He was too honourable to involve her in difficulty and embarrassment without her knowledge, and therefore candidly stated to her his convictions and circumstances. "When you gave me," he writes to her, September 13, 1817, "when you gave me an undivided heart, you knew not to whom you gave it. If my health is restored, I expect I shall try, by the assistance of Heaven, to preach the Gospel. I know not what denomination I shall commence preaching among, but think most probably among the Methodists. I shall make this a subject of prayer, and entreat God to show me my duty. If I am convinced that among this people I shall be most in the way of my duty, with them I shall continue; for, though I could have a much better living with almost any other denomination, yet I am determined to do my duty at the loss of all things." In another letter (October 27), alluding to some of Miss Peck's denominational scruples about

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their union, he says, "I should love you less if you felt differently. You must certainly act conscientiously. Those who come together from interest or passion make out to get along, I know not how, without being united in principle. But we must act differently. My friend may differ from me in principle and in form; yet, if his heart is right, I can still love him. I can give the right hand of fellowship to my Christian neighbour, though we belong to different churches; but I wish the partner of my bosom not only to worship the same God with me, but to kneel at the same altar." On three points, especially, Miss Peck felt dubious about the doctrines of Methodism, viz., final perseverance, Christian perfection, and human depravity. On the last two her difficulties had been augmented by a discourse recently preached in Providence, which was either very unguarded, or, which is at least quite as probable, had been misconstrued. Thus he speaks of them: "I must frankly tell you, that, with my present views, if I am a minister of the Gospel, I must preach the doctrines of holiness of heart and the danger of falling from grace properly explained and understood. You must have misunderstood Mr. O., or he must have misunderstood himself when he said he was perfectly holy, and denied total depravity. Perfect holiness belongs only to God. The Methodists hold to no such perfection for men in this world; nor do they believe that the perfection of glorified saints or angels, or that the purity of our first parents in Paradise, can be attained here. But they believe that 'Christ's blood cleanseth from all sin!' and that this cleansing is effected in this world, or never.* They do not deny that men are *naturally totally* depraved, but maintain the doctrine strongly; and that, without the influences of God's Spirit, man can no more think a good thought or do a good act than he can create a world. So that I think your previously-received impression must, inadvertently, have misinterpreted Mr. O.'s expressions, which perhaps were not clearly communicated. I could say something upon the danger of falling from grace, but this may not be

* "The term sinless perfection the Methodists who understand themselves do not use. It conveys to many a meaning which they by no means intend to inculcate."

interesting at the present time. Another opportunity may present itself. If you could obtain the fifth and sixth volumes of Fletcher's Checks, or a little volume called Doctrinal Tracts, or some of the older editions of the Methodist Discipline, and Wesley on Original Sin, you might get a correct idea of the Methodists' belief respecting the above doctrines, and perhaps get some ideas upon the subjects that have not occurred to you."

But he had other obstacles to his purpose. His old college friends, when they heard of it, were astonished beyond measure, and raised a violent outcry. One of these undertook to write him a letter of expostulation, from which, it seems, he was wonderfully at a loss to account for his friend's determination, until the idea of ambition came to his relief. "Fisk," he writes, "I know your ambition too well; it is exorbitant. And here I can solve the enigma. I fear, like the patron saint of your order, John Wesley, you have given yourself up to a disposition to 'rule in hell' rather than 'serve in heaven!'" Alas for logic and common sense! What was there in the prospects of Mr. Wesley or Mr. Fisk at the making of their choice to tempt ambition? Both had before them the prospect of the highest eminence in a much more elevated walk of life, and the former even the *offer* of patronage and preferment in the National Church. Could mortal foresight have divined that they would rise to their subsequent eminence and notoriety? This mode of reasoning would equally convict the Jewish lawgiver and the great apostle of the Gentiles; for both renounced brilliant prospects, and attained a much brighter fame in a department where entire purity of motive and deadness to the voice of fame were essential to success. His friend seems to have had in view Cæsar's willingness to be the first man in a village rather than the second man at Rome; but he forgot that Cæsar's ambition would not stoop so low while he had a hope of being the first man at Rome. Mr. Fisk replied to this singular billet of seven pages with dignity and good feeling; but, unfortunately, the letter is lost. But at the close of it he told him that, as it was probable he would outlive him (Mr. F.), if at any time he should chance to find in some

obscure place the "Itinerant's Grave," he might inscribe upon it, if he saw fit, "There lies one who, like John Wesley, the patron saint of his order, chose rather to reign in hell than serve in heaven," but he must be sure to add that this epitaph was written by his friend. This letter seems to have moderated his feelings, as he replied in a softened tone, and invited him to the village in which he resided, to become reader in the Episcopal Church which he attended, then destitute of a clergyman, where he might have a good support until he should be ready to take orders. But he did not yet understand the principles and motives of his correspondent; nor is it likely that he ever learned them, for he lived but a few years, and they never met again. It is not very strange, though worthy of observation, that this gentleman, who predicted that Mr. Fisk would obtain neither honour, profit, nor enjoyment in the course he had chosen, should himself have lived in obscurity, and died unknown to fame.*

* As Mr. Fisk's friend is not the only one who has alleged the sin of ambition against Mr. Wesley, I insert in this note the testimony of one—a Christian, a scholar, and a gentleman—who knew him well, and was well qualified to appreciate him. I allude to Alexander Knox, Esq., the private secretary of Lord Castle-reagh, and the bosom friend of Bishop Jebb. In his "Thirty Years' Correspondence" with his friend, he says, "Now I speak of the Quarterly, how am I provoked, in reading the first article, at those tasteless allegations of ambition and vanity, on which the reviewer, leaving S. (Southey) behind, rings the changes (nay, I might say, what ringers call a bob-major) on those supposed vices of my old friend's character. Why will they not see that the virtues which they ascribe to him are incompatible with the vices which they seem to take pleasure in imputing! 'No man can serve two masters.' To suppose, as they do, that John Wesley acted at one and the same time, in one and the same exertion, from love to God and man, and a love which is just as opposite to these as a love of money or of sensuality, is to imagine a monster in the moral world less credible than the centaur in the natural. I wish I knew how best to stamp on this evidence of reason *my* peculiar evidence of the fact, before I follow my venerable old friend into that country where only as yet his worth and moment can be adequately appreciated."—*Letter 162.*

Again: "My whole soul rises against these vile allegations of ambition and vanity, above both of which my precious old friend soared as much as the eagle above the glow-worm. Great minds are not vain; and his was a great mind, if any mind can be made great by disinterested benevolence, spotless purity, and simple devotedness to that one Supreme Good in whom, with the united *αὐθιγὰς* of the philosopher and the saint, he saw, and loved, and adored all that was infinitely amiable, true, sublime, and beatific. How little do they know of the human mind who could imagine such a spirit liable to the petty gravitations of animal man."—*Ibid., Letter 163.*

Mr. Fisk now devoted himself to a course of study suited to his sacred purposes. He re-examined his theological system, and adopted no views without sufficient evidence of their correctness. As an evidence of his solicitude and impartiality, we have the following fact: He had a friend, Mr. David Gould, who had succeeded him in Mr. Fletcher's office, was a member of the Congregational Church, and a decided Calvinist. With this gentleman he opened a correspondence on the points in debate between Calvinists and Arminians, and carried it to a considerable extent. It was intended purely as a trial of the merits of the case; for he distinctly avowed that, should his friendly opponent succeed in maintaining his doctrines, he would adopt and preach them. "Although," says Mr. Gould, "he failed to convince me, he left on my mind no doubt that he was firmly and conscientiously attached to his own opinions, and that he would prove an able supporter of them."

During this period Mr. Fisk's health was gradually improving, inasmuch that in a few months he began to officiate as an exhorter. Having, by suitable probation in this office, given satisfactory evidence of his "gifts, grace, and usefulness," he was, on the 14th of March, 1818, duly licensed by the Quarterly-meeting Conference of the Lyndon Circuit to preach the Gospel. To a certain class of readers it may appear that this indicates but a superficial qualification for the work he was undertaking, and too much indifference to theological knowledge. But there are few common topics on which more or greater mistakes are made than on the views of ministerial education held by the Methodist Church. We do not mean to deny that the standard is too low, nor need we explain how this arose. A conviction of the fact the Church is exhibiting by her efforts to elevate it. Nevertheless, there are some things pertaining to this subject of which the world in general is not aware, and which are certainly deserving of consideration. In their method, as given above, of "making proof of their ministry," since a person's natural talents, energy, and piety are practically tested, there is a strong guard against the intrusion of mere drones into the sacred office. In the next place, the Rules

of the Church are very strict and express in requiring mental improvement in its ministers. The directions given to them are contained in the Book of Discipline, at the 16th section of the first chapter, and are as follows :

“ SECTION XVI.

“ Of employing our Time profitably, when we are not Travelling, or engaged in Public Exercises.

“ Quest. 1. What general method of employing our time shall we advise ?

“ Ans. We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read the Scriptures with notes, and the closely practical parts of what Mr. Wesley has published. 3. From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast), read, with much prayer, some of our best religious tracts (works).

“ Quest. 2. Why is it that the people under our care are not better ?

“ Ans. Other reasons may concur, but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.

“ Quest. 3. But why are we not more knowing ?

“ Ans. Because we are idle. We forget our first rule, ‘Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.’ We fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of us spend as many hours a day in God’s work as we did formerly in man’s work ? We talk, talk, or read what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how ? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. 2. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in the four-and-twenty. ‘But I have no taste for reading.’ *Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment.*”

Does the reader inquire what is the range of studies contemplated in these directions ? He may form some idea

from the fact that Mr. Wesley himself wrote not less than sixteen fair-sized 8vo volumes, including a Compendium of Logic, and grammars of five different languages, besides running annotations on the entire Bible, and an extensive Compilation on Natural Philosophy. In addition to these, he published "A Christian Library," in fifty volumes 12mo, consisting of selections from the best works, ancient and modern, on practical theology. And if he will consider that even these would be exhausted in a few years by the above course, he will interpret the phrase "best religious tracts" to include every kind of information needful to render the mind "thoroughly furnished unto all good works." In fact, so it ever has been understood by our most eminent and successful ministers.

It is a farther advantage in this plan that it is to end only with life. The Methodist minister should never consider his education completed, and then sit down in idleness. He is to keep up a vigorous mental action by constant habits of renovating study. And, lastly, which is not the slightest consideration, his knowledge is to be gained for immediate practical uses. This, in many points of view, is of great importance. It contributes greatly to mental development. The mind, to be vigorous, must be kept in a state of tension by lively interest, and no interest is so lively as that which springs from fully awakened religious sensibilities. It tends not less to render the knowledge acquired efficient in the improvement of the heart, since it is thus kept in close contact with the affections. Where theology is not studied with this view, where it is pursued only professionally or scientifically, the tendency must be deadening; and that must be a very defective theological training which develops the intellectual faculties at the expense of the religious sensibilities, since so much of the minister's usefulness depends on the condition of his heart. Hence the truth and excellence of the observations of Mr. Orme: "It is a matter of regret that theology is often studied more with a view to the benefit of others than of the student himself. It is pursued as a profession rather than as belonging to personal character and enjoyment. Hence it frequently produces a pernicious

instead of a salutary effect on the mind, and debases rather than elevates the character. Familiarity with Divine things, which does not arise from personal interest in them, is to be dreaded more than most evils to which man is liable."*

Nor ought we to omit the influence of the itinerant system on the mental character. The limited resources of his preachers led Mr. Wesley to adopt it, and the expedient has proved a wise one. For economizing and distributing the talent of the ministry, for giving constant impulse to the mind, and for improvement in sermonizing, it has decided advantages. It can be easily seen, also, that an itinerating minister has greater opportunities for enlarging his mental stores than one who, being settled, has two or three new sermons a week to prepare. To be sure, a man in either case may become a drone; but then a travelling drone is, after all, preferable to a drone stationary.

The success of this experiment in the Methodist ministry can scarcely be denied; for, whatever opinion may be entertained of their improvement in learning, no one will deny that they have been eminently successful in enlarging the boundaries of Messiah's kingdom. And, considering their recent origin, and the nature of the work they have been engaged in, they have probably contributed their full share to the stores of human knowledge. We do not deny that improvements may be made, nay, are imperiously demanded, in our system; but then it must be by addition, and not by substitution.

As these observations seemed requisite to set our subject's course and character in a proper light, we trust the reader will excuse them. Such were, in fact, the views with which he began his labours. Having an ample foundation of classical, scientific, and general literature, he now devoted himself assiduously to the acquisition of theological knowledge. His mind soon became impregnated with the sentiments and spirit of our early ministers. His first sermon was delivered in the schoolhouse† at Lyndon Corner, in the begin-

* Life and Times of Richard Baxter, vol. i., p. 8; London, 1830.

† The building, when I visited it, was in ruins, having been destroyed by fire in the spring of 1840.

ning of February, 1818. It was on the text, "Who is sufficient for these things?"—2 Corinthians, ii., 16. The scope of the sermon was to show the obligations, duties, trials, and supports of the Christian minister, and greatly were the congregation surprised at the deep, clear, and mature views which he presented. To the Rev. Mr. Peck especially, under whose labours he had entered anew upon the Christian profession, it was a high gratification. He listened to him with manifest surprise and delight.

Having thus commenced his work, he soon attracted great attention. This might have been expected. His physical advantages were decidedly superior. His person was good, his manner agreeable, his countenance deeply expressive both of intellect and devotion, and the effect was heightened by his emaciated and sepulchral appearance. He also possessed a remarkably fine voice. Its compass and power were not very great, but its pathetic tones extremely touching. "There was," says a gentleman, now a clergyman in another church, who frequently heard him at that time, "a zeal, a pathos in his eloquence which always touched the youthful heart. He had certain tones of voice which all felt accorded well with the story of Christ's dying love." His sermons, even at this early period, were distinguished by good sense, concatenated thought, clear exhibitions of evangelical truth and duty, and were delivered in a style of great pungency and power. All his discourses evinced a vehement desire for the salvation of souls; and of his sincerity there could be no doubt, for he was one of them

" Whose doctrine and whose life,
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That they are honest in the sacred cause."

No wonder that, with these qualifications, he rose rapidly in public favour. Indeed, he soon stood forth pre-eminent in acceptability and usefulness. It was a great beauty in him that all this was without any apparent effort to be great, or of consciousness that he was so regarded. He appeared, as he really was, solely intent upon the fulfilment of his commission. The impression made on his auditors harmonized with an apostle's language, "We preach not ourselves,

but Christ Jesus the Lord ; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

His parents were now highly gratified, for the father's wishes and mother's prayers were both fulfilled. Yet these judicious and worthy parents never let their son discern the height of their admiration. Nay, they took the utmost pains to prevent him from feeling that he was an object of attention, and from forming a high opinion of his own powers. For this purpose his mother especially, when he received any commendation, would always name some defect ; or, if his superiority was mentioned, she would suggest a comparison with one much before him in age and experience. Indeed, the torrents of applause he received seemed to quicken the good lady's perception of his faults to such a degree, that the family really began to think that she had, after all, but a slender opinion of her son's performances. The mistake was corrected in a rather singular manner. One day she received a letter from one of her sisters, informing her that her son had become a minister, and expressing a wish that she (Mrs. Fisk) could hear him, as she thought him an excellent preacher. When she had read this paragraph she involuntarily placed the letter in her lap, and as with the other hand she raised her spectacles from her eyes, she said, with all the feeling of a mother, " Sister B. has never heard my son !" The remark fell like a ray of light upon a dark spot. It exhibited at once the rigid prudence of the humble Christian, and the deep emotion of the admiring parent.

Some account of his own views of himself, and of his new relation to mankind, is contained in the following extract of a letter to his aunt, Mrs. Palmer, dated February 6, 1818 :

" Yes, strange as it may seem, your unworthy nephew has commenced preaching. Next Sabbath will be the fifth time that I have *attempted* to speak in public, in obedience to that injunction which I think I feel laid upon me, ' Go preach the Gospel.' Nothing but a sense of duty would have induced me to undertake the arduous and highly-responsible duties of the Gospel ministry. I may be deceived, but I think ' necessity is laid upon me ; yea, wo is me if I preach not the Gospel.' Yet I feel myself very unworthy, very inca-

pable of this office. I lack understanding ; I lack wisdom ; above all, that wisdom that cometh from above. I have too little devotion, too little piety. A minister of the Gospel ought to be completely given up to the work. He ought to have such an intercourse with Heaven that the world will be all beneath his feet. He ought to have so much of the spirit of his Master as to soar above the party spirit that too much prevails among professed Christians, and not forbid any that he may find casting out devils because they follow not us."

We have already said that Mr. Fisk did not resolve on devoting himself to the ministry without suitable consideration and much inward conflict. Happily, we have an insight into his inmost feelings upon this subject. It is afforded by a paper containing his reflections, thrown into the form of a dialogue between himself and his Divine Master, in which his objections to the step are stated and answered. This dialogue he once rehearsed, in the year 1838, as though it related to another person, at a meeting which he attended, of, I believe, the Preachers' Aid Society in the City of Baltimore :

"DIALOGUE.

"*Christ.* Go preach my Gospel.

"*Answer.* But, Lord, I have other engagements.

"*C.* You are not your own ; you are bought with a price.

"*A.* But, Lord, I have been preparing myself for another profession. I have been struggling for an education. I have high prospects before me, &c.

"*C.* What have you that you have not received ?

"*A.* Lord, I have strong domestic feelings, and I hope one day to have a family and home of my own.

"*C.* He that loveth houses or lands, wife or children more than me, is not worthy of me.

"*A.* Lord, I have aged parents, and I am an only son. Filial love and duty require that I should look after them.

"*C.* He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

"*A.* Lord, is there no excuse ? May not another answer ?

"*C.* The gifts and callings of God are without repentance.

"*A.* At least, let me first stop and bury my father and mother.

"*C.* Let the dead bury their dead.

"*A.* At any rate, I must wait a while, and acquire some property, &c.

"*C.* He that putteth his hand to the plough and looketh back, is not fit for the kingdom of Heaven.

"*A.* Lord, I cannot go.

H

"C. Wo unto you if you preach not the Gospel.

"A. But, Lord, wilt thou not pity a poor helpless wretch, who begs for an excuse as one would plead for his life!

"C. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be made rich.'

"Here" (as he related the circumstance in Baltimore) "the dialogue ended. The young man covered his face with his hands, and bursting into tears, cried,

" 'Nay, but I yield, I yield.'

"The bond was signed and sealed, and the youth was consigned over, soul and body, to the Church. The next thing I saw of him, he was threading a pathless forest among the Green Mountains, bordering upon the Canada line, driving his horse before him because of the roughness of the wilderness, cheerful as an angel on an errand of mercy. And I heard his song, with which he made the ragged mountain tops that hung over his path reverberate; and what, sir, do you think it was?

" 'No foot of land do I possess,
Nor cottage in this wilderness,
A poor wayfaring man :
I lodge a while in tents below,
Or gladly wander to and fro,
Till I my Canaan gain.

Nothing on earth I call my own,
A stranger to the world unknown,
I all their goods despise ;
I trample on their whole delight,
And seek a city out of sight,
A city in the skies.' "

CHAPTER III.

Craftsbury Circuit.—Exposure and Incidents.—Letters.—Charlestown.—
Resolutions.—Christian Perfection.—Correspondence.

MR. FISK's first field of labour was Craftsbury Circuit, at the distance of about twenty-five or thirty miles from his father's house. He was appointed to this place by the presiding elder. Craftsbury is the seat of justice for Orleans county. It contained an intelligent and respectable, though small population. The state of religion was very low, and Methodism was scarcely known except as a term of reproach.

It was in the month of April, 1818, that he took his departure from his father's dwelling. The parting scene between him and his aged parents at the commencement of his itinerant ministry was very affecting. He was not going to be established in ease and comfort, in a respectable position in society, with the confidence and esteem of the most influential on his side. He was to encounter the responsibilities, the hardships, the meager support, the uncertain reception, and certain obloquy of a Methodist minister, at a period in the Church's history when the step he took required the courage of a hero and the devotion of a martyr. But we cannot describe the scene. The reader must imagine it; or, if he choose, he may find a description ready to his hand in Dr. Fisk's sermon on the death of the Rev. Edward Hyde.

His preaching in Craftsbury was at first in a private dwelling, and afterward in the courthouse. He preached three sermons the first week. But, not seeing immediate fruit, he began to inquire, "Lord, hast thou sent me here? Is my work done? Must I leave this people? O what darkness! Why did I leave my friends, and come into this inhospitable clime, where hearts are colder than the snow that covers these mountains, and harder than the rocks that lock them together? I have mistaken my errand. O my God! strengthen me to fill my appointments, and I will then re-

turn." But he preached with redoubled effort and power, and in a short time the desire of his heart was given him. A revival of religion broke out and spread through the place, pervading all classes, and in a few months a respectable and efficient church was organized. A place of worship was afterward erected, and it is now, and has been for many years, one of the most prominent stations in that region. The subjects of this revival were remarkable for constancy and usefulness in their profession. Several became distinguished in the Church, and two, at least, have been for many years engaged in the sacred ministry.

While in Craftsbury he was not less diligent in pastoral visiting than faithful in the pulpit. His visits were not mere formal calls: he sought the edification of his people. Yet his religion did not make him ascetic; on the contrary, he was cheerful, affable, and affectionate. He took an interest in whatever related to his people, and by showing some interest in trivial things, he found a readier access to their hearts. Thus he gained the affection and confidence of all, young and old; for

"Even children followed with endearing wile,
And plucked his gown to share the good man's smile."

But it was the lot of our subject to suffer something from the strife of tongues. The work of the Spirit, as might be supposed, was designated by various hard names, while a staunch supporter of the old order of things, being very indignant and lachrymose at the recent innovations, exclaimed, "That Fisk has been about here, and has undone in a few months all that our minister has done in twelve years." Some even made attempts to tarnish his reputation. But, on the other hand, he was happy in possessing the friendship and warm support of many of the most intelligent and respectable people in the place.

We may here introduce one or two incidents illustrative of Mr. Fisk's peculiar self-possession and promptitude. A lady at whose house he often stayed was, unfortunately, subject to temporary fits of insanity. During one of these attacks she one day rushed to him with a large, sharp-pointed butcher's or carving-knife in her hand. Persons who were

present saw it and trembled. Stepping hastily up to Mr. Fisk, she tore open his vest and shirt-bosom ere he was aware, and placing the sharp point to his skin, said, "You must die. You talk so much of Heaven, I am going to send you there; for you are too good to live." Without quailing in the least, he looked her calmly and steadily in the face. She paused for some time, when, removing the instrument, she said, "You are fit to live or die. We want such men on earth, so I will let you live a little longer," and immediately left the apartment. The other incident is rather amusing than otherwise. As he was one day preaching, this lady sitting not far from him, he had occasion to use a passage from the parable of Lazarus, and misquoted it. "In hell," said the preacher, "he lifted up his *hell*, being in—" "Say eyes," exclaimed Mrs. C. Turning immediately towards her, "Thank you, madam," he added, with a slight inclination of the head; "In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torment," and went on without the slightest perceptible discomposure.

Craftsbury Circuit, like most others in that new region, was very laborious. The country is rugged and mountainous; many of the people poor; and he often lodged where he could count the stars through the crevices of the roof. But he was no Sybarite. He never turned aside for difficulties, unless they were absolutely insurmountable. In some cases he was even imprudent in his efforts to meet his appointments. In the winter of 1818, '19 (for he had been admitted on trial into Conference, and reappointed to Crafts-bury Circuit), he set out one morning, after a heavy fall of snow, to ride about fourteen miles. The weather was extremely cold, the roads blocked up with snow, which had drifted very much, and but one or two families resided within the distance. He had a friend with him. On the road their horse became completely exhausted, while himself and his companion were chilled with the cold. In this condition they were obliged to alight, tread down a path for the horse, and lead him forward; then beat down a path again, and again lead the horse, and so on for several hundred yards, till, weary and faint, they despaired of getting through.

They then proposed to retire to an old barn not far distant, for there was no house near, wrap themselves in their buffalo skins, and await their destiny. This, however, was certain death: it was equally so to remain. Summoning, therefore, all their strength, they made another desperate effort, and finally succeeded in making their escape. But the consequence was that he was confined to his bed for several weeks. Prodigality of life, where any good was to be accomplished, ever characterized our subject; but he carried it, in this instance, farther than prudence or duty required.

We have spoken of his amiable and obliging disposition. We give a simple illustration of it. One day, I think the same winter, riding with his sister Mary in a sleigh through the unbroken snow, suddenly a voice reached their ears, crying "Stop a minute!" And at the same instant was seen a poor woman wading through the snow, and tossing a bundle of yarn into the sleigh, begged them to leave it at a house some distance on the road, as the snow prevented her getting thither. They were much amused at the poor woman's simplicity and assurance; but Mr. Fisk observed, with one of his pleasant smiles, "Well, Mary, if we can help this poor woman a little, I believe it is all the good we can do this snowy day." In the same spirit he would often accommodate persons with a seat in his chaise or sleigh, gain a good deal of information from them as to the state of religion, society, &c., where they lived, always taking care to drop some useful reflections, instruction, or reproof. "Thus," he would remark, "though the seed is 'sown by the way side,' some kernels might escape the devouring birds, 'spring up, and bear fruit.'"

We now suspend our narrative for a short time to insert a few passages from letters written by Mr. Fisk about this time to Miss Peck. The first shows how completely his earthly affections were subjected to his conscience:

" March 26, 1818.

"I know not what to think of your *qualified consent*. I have received license in the Methodist connexion to officiate as a minister of the Gospel. In such circumstances, it is a

duty I owe the connexion to wish to have my companion worship at the *same altar* with me. * * * As a private member of the Church, I think *I* could conform in many respects to the customs and forms of any Church, and in a manner, too, altogether improper in a minister. This you will admit; but far be it from me to urge you into a conformity to my modes and doctrines. And I agree with you in thinking that we ought not to let our feelings rise superior to our judgment."

In another letter he writes, "And what shall I do? Has not God answered my prayers? Has he not blessed my labours? Then I must continue among the Methodists, whatever it costs me. My college friends reproach and ridicule me; the world persecutes, and—but hold, the Lord is good, and I must obey Him. I have seen the haughty bowing, the profane confessing, and the gay and airy forsaking their follies and pursuing the paths of piety. I am, then, in the way of my duty; and if I cannot find a companion that will unite in the work heart and hand, why should I wish to take her from her friends and her *home*? If she is not hearty in the work, she cannot receive that blessing in it that I feel."

To the Same.

"MY DEAR R.,

"After waiting with no small anxiety for several weeks, I have at length been gratified with an answer to my last. I feared you were sick, and my forebodings have proved too true. Surely you have been educated in the school of affliction. O my dear girl, how do you support yourself under your numerous sorrows? Support yourself! That is impossible. 'The Lord supports the sinking mind.' And how rejoiced am I, that, in all your afflictions, you have a Saviour to go to for support and strength. O! may you always find him a present help in time of need; so that you may say with the apostle, 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing!'" I certainly sympathize with you; and if I were with you, how gladly would I bear a part in all your griefs. But this pleasure is denied me, and it is only through the

cold and tedious medium of epistolary correspondence that I can communicate to you my feelings, or attempt to sooth your troubled mind. But I go to the throne of grace, and try to pour out my soul to the Father of mercies in your behalf. O! my tender-hearted and merciful Saviour, Thou who, in the days of thy flesh, took delight in comforting mourners and raising up the afflicted; Thou who wast a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; Thou who didst weep with the mourners at Lazarus's tomb, hear, I beseech thee, the prayers of thy unworthy servant in behalf of his absent, afflicted friend: one whom Thou hast seen fit, in Thy wisdom, to pierce through with many sorrows; one whom Thou hast made to drink deep of affliction's cup. Sanctify unto her the chastenings she has already felt, and pity her present distress. If her only brother is yet a subject of prayer, raise him, in mercy, from his bed of sickness, to be a comfort to his sister, and a support to his aged mother. But, whatever thou hast determined, support them under all their losses; and may they be more than made up to them in the better enjoyment of thyself. Wilt Thou, who art the widow's God, and a Father to the fatherless, grant that this widowed mother, whose glass of life runs fastly to its finish, and this fatherless child, may in faith anticipate that happy day when the mother and the child, the sister and the brother, shall meet on those shores of delight where they shall unite in one continued scene of 'joy and gladness: sorrow and sighing shall flee away.' O! my friend, shall we ever meet there? Lord, grant that we may. Let this comfort you. Do not, I entreat you, suffer your afflictions to cast a gloom of heart-sickening melancholy over your mind. Sometimes I think, if I should see you now, your appearance would be greatly altered; I should see that countenance, once beaming with smiles, pale, cheerless, and sad. But I mistake; the Christian is not so. He who has no hopes but in this world's enjoyments may well be sad when he sees those enjoyments leaving him. But religion, the heart-cheering religion of Jesus, lights up a smile in the Christian's countenance in the midst of affliction; yes, my dear R. smiles through her tears, and thanks her God for her hope of Heaven."

To the Same.

"April 29, 1818.

"MY DEAR R.,

"Your letters of late are messengers of affliction. The discontented mind, by way of complaint, is often inquiring, 'Why are my afflictions so much severer than others?' But the submissive mind, desirous to kiss the rod, is ever inquiring under affliction, Lord, what lesson of heavenly wisdom ought I to learn from this? I trust, my dear R., that you are of the latter class. And remember, that God designs, by the afflictions he brings upon his children, not only to teach THEM lessons of submission and obedience, but also to illustrate and vindicate His providence and government to *others*. When we see the humble, pious follower of Christ borne down by a weight of affliction from the cradle to the grave, while every stroke drives him nearer to his God; and when, on the other hand, we see the proud and impious blasphemer enjoy a long life of almost uninterrupted prosperity, 'flourishing like the green bay-tree,' what conclusion are we to draw from all this? Why, that the sanctions of God's law, to wit, the rewards and penalties thereunto annexed, are to be executed in another world. From which we draw one of the strongest and most incontrovertible arguments (aside from the Scriptures) in proof of the doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Rejoice, then, and be exceeding glad that your Lord and Master, whose cause you wish to promote, has seen fit to make you the passive instrument to illustrate His government and 'vindicate the ways of God to man;' at the same time remembering that, wherein you are able in this way to be of service to the world, your crown will shine the brighter in the world to come. Let me ask, my dear friend, are you making advances in the Divine life? I can assure you I have of late felt more and more the necessity of 'growing in grace,' of having a deeper work effected in the heart. Let us not be so fearful of the expressions, 'perfect conformity to God's will,' 'perfect love,' &c., as not to seek the thing which these terms represent. I trust you are of that number that are

‘looking forward and pressing forward.’ I have seen so many profess religion, attach themselves to some church, and then settle down in an outward form of religion, and, at the same time, into an *inward and outward* conformity to the world, that it causes me to mourn for those who ‘have a name to live while they are dead.’ I have in this respect suffered so much myself, and see my own danger so much still, that it is the constant desire of my heart, Lord, give me more religion. And this I am induced to do, not only that I may love and serve God better, but also that I may be more serviceable to others. And I think the Lord has, in some measure, heard my prayers.”

At the Lynn Conference of 1819, Mr. Fisk was appointed to Charlestown, Massachusetts. This was a very trying appointment to him. The society was small, in every way feeble, and embarrassed with debt. But he went to his station, trusting only in Him who said, “Lo! I am with you always.”

We insert the skeleton of his first sermon in Charlestown, both as an evidence of the spirit in which he commenced his labours there, and as a specimen of his mode of sermonizing :

“ ‘Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak : for I am a child.’—
Jeremiah, i., 6.

“ In the case of Jeremiah, we see that of the Gospel preacher at the present day. In examining the text with the context, we shall notice,

“ I. The call. 1. The Lord sanctified him from the womb (v. 5). 2. He ordained him (v. 5). 3. He touched his mouth, that is, qualified him, and gave him his commission (v. 9).

“ II. The message. He was set over nations and over kingdoms : 1. To root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down. 2. To build and to plant (v. 10).

“ So the minister of the Word must pull down the stronghold of Satan’s kingdom (2 Corinthians, x., 4, &c.), and build up the Church of God, &c. (Matthew, xvi., 19, and xviii., 18).

“ III. The excuse. I am not qualified for this important

duty ; ' I am a child.' Young in years, young in experience, young in knowledge, whom shall I meet with ? The old : old in years, old in sin, old in the wisdom of the world. I shall meet with the rich, with the noble ; with the scorner, with the persecutor. ' Who is sufficient for these things ? ' Not I. I am weak—I am a child. Ah, Lord God ! I cannot speak.

" IV. The encouragement. 1. I send thee (v. 7). 2. I have put words in thy mouth (v. 7) : see also Matthew, x., 16, 19, 20. 3. I am with thee, to *deliver* thee (v. 19) : see Matthew, xxviii., 20. 4. I have made thee a defenced city, and an iron pillar and brazen walls against the whole land (v. 18). ' The servant of God is immortal till his work is done.'

" REFLECTIONS.

" I. If God sends, how important the mission !

" II. A faithful preacher must expect reproaches.

" III. But he has many encouragements ; and if these will not make him bold, and plain, and faithful in his preaching, let him at least remember this : ' Be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them' (v. 17).

" APPLICATION.

" My brethren, these considerations induce me to present myself before you as a plain man in my doctrines, and bold in my Master's cause. I received my appointment among you with trembling. I was ready to say, ' I cannot speak ; I am a child.' But God, in his providence, said Go. I have come ; and though I am but a child, I have come in that ' name that is above every name.' Therefore, in my doctrine and exhortation I shall not spare. Ye aged, look not upon my youth, nor disregard the message because it is delivered by a child, for it has the sanction of the *Ancient of days*. Ye middle-aged, let not your pride of worldly wisdom despise the simplicity of my message ; for, though I address you not with enticing words of man's wisdom, yet I trust it shall be ' in demonstration of the Spirit and of power.' Ye youth, scoff not ; for this shall prove a savour of life or of

death. May it prove a savour of life to all, for Jesus' sake. Amen."

The following paper, dated June 30th, 1819, will show the secret of his strength and success :

" Resolutions entered into for the better Improvement of my Time.

" 1. I am resolved, so far as I can effect it, to retire at nine and rise at five.

" 2. I will appropriate one hour to my morning devotions.

" 3. I will allow one hour for breakfast, family devotion, and such incidental circumstances as may demand my attention.

" 4. I will write each day two hours.

" 5. I will spend two hours in some regular scientific or literary study, which I shall adopt from time to time.

" 6. I will spend one hour in miscellaneous reading.

" 7. One hour for my devotions at noon.

" 8. One hour for dinner.

" 9. One hour (each day) in preparing my discourses for the Sabbath.

" 10. The remainder of the day will be generally devoted to visiting.

" 11. Whenever I am constrained, from any cause, to break in upon my regular course, I will endeavour, as much as possible, to prevent any loss of time by returning to it as soon as may be, and then will attend to those branches that my judgment dictates will be the most improper to neglect ; at all times remembering not to curtail my devotions and my preparation for the Sabbath.

" 12. When, in the course of my various employments, a passage of Scripture opens to my mind, or a striking thought occurs to me, I will take the first opportunity to commit it to writing.

" 13. In my devotions it shall be my particular business to pray for a deepening of the work of grace in my heart, and for a revival of the work of (God) in the town where I labour. My usefulness can be secured only by the blessing

of God. Therefore, I must particularly pray for the Divine assistance in all my labours.

“14. I must not dine out on the Sabbath.”

He adopted also a practice of noting down subjects that occurred to his mind, for the purpose either of meditation, or for discussion with his friends in private or in the social circle. Thus I find, for instance, the following questions as “subjects for consideration and inquiry :

“How far can any religion compare, taking into the account both the circumstances under which it was propagated and the success with which it was crowned, with the Christian religion ?

“How far may those bodily exercises, with which many religiously affected are influenced by, proceed from the immediate operation of a good spirit, and how far from that of a bad spirit ? and how we may be able to distinguish them.”

Christian perfection is a tenet for which, more than any other, the Methodist Church has endured the shafts of opposition and ridicule. Yet never, perhaps, have good and sensible men, so much as in this case, thought themselves at liberty to fight in the dark, and pronounce without any adequate investigation. The truth is, this doctrine contains no more than what the most devout Christians of every age have believed and enjoyed. It is found in substance in the ancient fathers, and in the reformers. It is clearly exhibited in the most spiritual of the Roman Catholic Church, from Thomas à Kempis to Fenelon and the Marquis de Renty, and shone brilliantly in the chief luminaries of the Anglican churches, such as Hooker, Herbert, Leighton, Bunyan, Scougal, Doddridge ; and in our country I add Dr. and Mrs. Edwards, Brainard, and Payson. Methodists never contended for higher perfection than we find in these. The chief difference between us and others, therefore, is the use of terms. “But why, then, employ terms that are liable to be misunderstood ?” To this we simply reply that we use only the language of our common Text-book ; and we think that great mischief has been done by “speaking in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth” instead of those

"which the Holy Ghost teacheth." If, therefore, we use Scriptural terms in the Scriptural sense, it is plain to see that the controversy does not lie against us.

This is not the place for a theological discussion. Nevertheless, these preparatory remarks appeared necessary to place our subject's subsequent history in a proper light. For this reason, we trust the reader will excuse us if we introduce for the same purpose a few remarks from a pen of whose productions we have already availed ourselves. It is the language of one who was not committed to any theory, and who speaks rather as a philosopher than as a divine. Mr. Knox, in one of his letters to Mr. Jebb, afterward Bishop of Limerick, blames him for preaching in a way that would be construed into an attack upon the Methodists. Thus he proceeds: "Nay, the very point you aim at in them, I mean their view of Christian perfection, is, in my mind, so essentially right and important, that it is on this account particularly I value them above other denominations of that sort. I am aware that ignorant individuals expose what is in itself true by their unfounded pretensions and irrational descriptions; but, with the sincerest disapproval of every such excess, I do esteem John Wesley's stand for holiness to be that which does immortal honour to his name. * * * * In John Wesley's views of Christian perfection are combined, in substance, all the sublime morality of the Greek fathers, the spirituality of the mystics, and the Divine philosophy of our favourite Platonists. Macarius, Fenélon, Lucas, and all of their respective classes, have been consulted and digested by him; and his ideas are essentially theirs."*

* "Thirty Years' Correspondence," Letter xix.—That the reader may see that Mr. Knox had good reason for making his closing assertion, I subjoin the following citations from two of the authors he has named. The first two are from the Homilies of Macarius, a Christian writer of the fourth century, born at Thebais, in Egypt, and died at Scetis, aged ninety years:

"But the unsteady and unskilful, whenever grace operates, imagine presently they have no more sin; whereas they that have discretion cannot deny that even we, who have the grace of God, may be molested again with evil thoughts. *For we have often had instances of some among the brethren that have experienced such a degree of joy and grace as to affirm, that for five or six years running they had no sin in them; and yet, after all, when they thought themselves freed entirely from it, the corruption that lurked within was stirred up anew, and they were wellnigh burned up.*"—*Homily ix.*

Mr. Wesley, therefore, was neither an inventor nor discoverer in theology. His merit consisted chiefly in four things: First. He popularized these sublime subjects, and brought them within reach of ordinary minds, and showed that to be attainable by all which had been regarded as the privilege of a favoured few. Secondly. He adopted a more Scriptural phraseology, and one less liable to be perverted to sinful indulgences. Thirdly. He pointed out more clearly the mode of its attainment. Fourthly. He brought that to an immediate issue which had been previously spread out over a long space, perhaps a lifetime. This is of no small importance. Setting a definite object before the mind for present attainment wonderfully quickens the faculties, and stimulates one to much more vigorous efforts than when the object is distant, vague, and uncertain. It was owing to these things, in no small degree, that a great elevation was

Again: "As a stone in the bottom of the sea is every way surrounded with water, so are these (mature Christians) every way drenched with the Holy Spirit, and made like to Christ himself, possessing unalterably within themselves the virtues of the power of the Spirit, being blameless within and without, and spotless and pure; for, being brought to perfection by the Spirit, how is it possible they should outwardly produce the fruits of sin! But at all times and in every instance do the fruits of the Spirit shine brightly out in their whole deportment."

—*Homily x.*

Thus far Macarius. Let us now hear Dr. Lucas. After having explained the nature of Christian perfection, he proceeds to answer objections:

"It may be objected against the account I have given of the growth of virtue, that, when I come to the maturity of it, my colours are too bright, my strokes too bold, and the form I have given it too Divine. * * * To this I have several things to say. First. I have described the Christian's spiritual progress in the same manner, and as near as I could, in the same words which the Scripture does. Secondly. I do not pretend anywhere to assert that there is any state in this life raised above trials and temptations. Thirdly. As the world now goes, perfection is a state we arrive at very late,* and all the way to it full of labour and travail, full of dangers and difficulties; so that, upon this account, the life of man may well be said to be a perpetual warfare. But, fourthly, I do by no means affirm that the perfect man is incapable of improvement. Of this I shall have occasion to unfold my sense more fully afterward." I have cited this passage, that the reader may perceive that in the objections and the answers to them there was a strong resemblance, though not a perfect identity, between Mr. Wesley's views and those of the pious and sightless prebendary of Westminster. But they differed in regard to the mode of attainment, as they did also in regard to that of conversion.

* "True," says Mr. Wesley, in the "Christian Library," "but it is our own fault."

given to the piety of the Wesleyan Societies. But to proceed.

On the 10th of August Mr. Fisk attended a camp-meeting at Wellfleet, on Cape Cod. This meeting was signalized by remarkable displays of Divine power in the awakening of sinners and sanctification of believers. The subject of our narrative had many exercises of mind on the subject of Christian perfection, but was not, when he went to the meeting, under any special concern about it. But while there his attention was strongly interested in it, especially under a sermon by the Rev. Timothy Merritt, on the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He became deeply sensible of his want of full conformity to the Christian standard; he sought earnestly unto God through the blood of the atoning sacrifice; and in the course of the meeting he obtained that "perfect love" that "casteth out fear." His religious emotions now acquired a wonderful intensity and elevation. One who was present at the time says, "His language and whole appearance had something in it more than human, most manifestly indicating that his soul then glowed with ardours of love nearly allied to those of angels. The next morning he preached on growth in grace, when the impression made upon the audience was deep, awful, glorious. His beautiful classic style, vivified with fire from Heaven's own altar, never appeared to better advantage. He poured forth a full soul in 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn.' " *

* There is some resemblance between the case of Mr. Fisk and that of the excellent Mr. Herbert, as related in his Life by Izaak Walton: On taking orders, it is said, "The apprehensions of the last great account that he was to make for the cure of souls made him fast and pray often, and consider for not less than a month. * * * And in this time of consideration he endured such spiritual conflicts as none can think but only those that have endured them."—"And at length, when, at his induction, he was shut into Bemerton Church, being left there alone to toll the bell (as the law directs), he stayed so much longer than an ordinary time before he returned to those friends that stayed, expecting him at the church door, that his friend, Mr. Woodnot, looked into the church window, and saw him prostrate on the ground before the altar; at which time and place (as he told Mr. Woodnot) he set some rules to himself for the future manage of his life, and then and there made a vow to labour to keep them." From this time he exhibited such uncommon sanctity that he has ever been distinguished as the "pious" or the "divine" Herbert.

Some effects of his late exercises of mind are not unworthy of notice. His views of the Divine Being, and especially of the power, glory, and fulness of Christ, were almost overwhelming. He felt such a horror of sin, and had so great an apprehension of the purity of the Divine law, that he "almost," to use his own strong language, "feared to set his foot on the ground lest he should do wrong." Familiarity with these views would necessarily abate somewhat the intensity of his feelings. But other effects became permanent. Previously to this he had often doubted, not only his interest in Christ, but the truth of the Christian religion; afterward, never. From this time he has been heard to say that he never laid his head upon his pillow without feeling that, if he never waked in this world, all would be well. Prior to this he was often subject to desponding, gloomy seasons; we heard him say long afterward that he knew no gloomy hours; his mind was always serene and happy. This may have been owing, in part, to that admirable balance of mind which characterized him, and on which our mental enjoyment so greatly depends; but it was matured and confirmed by that equal balance of the moral faculties which the efficient spirit of Christianity produced.

Writing to his sister some time after, he says, "I have found, my dear sister, much consolation of late in that religion which I profess. God has been pleased to brighten my evidence of acceptance with him. I have been enabled to say, 'I have not a doubt; I feel it so.' I have dedicated myself anew to the Lord and to his ministry. Though I love you, my sister, and my dear parents, if possible, better than ever, yet I have felt such a complete devotedness to the work in which I am engaged, that those ties which have hitherto given me pain are loosed. Most willingly do I devote all to God, and rejoice in the service of such a Master. I look back upon my past life, upon my follies and my wanderings, and wonder at the mercy that has spared me, and at that Providence that has protected me. O that I could love this Saviour more and serve him better!"

To the Rev. Phineas Peck he says, in a letter about the same date, "O! my brother, I could write pages on this

subject; but I must forbear. I thank God that I ever saw this day. I love our Church better than ever. How glad am I that I never left it, and how thankful that they never cast me off when backslidden from the cause! How grateful am I to you for all your fatherly concern and care for my soul. I pray God to reward you in heaven. I want to see you more than ever, and all my Christian friends in Vermont. O, encourage them to go on. Let *holiness of heart* be the motto. My dear brother, will you preach it—in the desk, in the class, and from house to house?"

Mr. Fisk's labours at Charlestown were very successful. His congregations were quite large and respectable; but this, with his usual modesty, he ascribed to the unhappy state of the other churches, which were at variance with their ministers, and whose members therefore came in crowds to hear him. But, instead of congratulating himself upon this, he writes to his father, "If these difficulties should be satisfactorily settled, our congregations will probably be considerably diminished. However, we do not wish to build ourselves up on the ruins of others. We wish, for the good of the cause in general, that these disturbances may cease." Let such ever be the spirit of a Christian minister. There is work enough for all; and if all work together in harmony, there will still be far too much left undone.

But his labours were not confined to Charlestown. This was a year of eminent prosperity to our Zion, and in many of the adjacent towns a delightful state of religious interest existed. Mr. Fisk was always ready to aid in this work as he had opportunity, and everywhere his labours were gladly received.

An incident which occurred about this time in one of his visits to Lynn, illustrates the effect of his preaching, as well as his self-possession and presence of mind. He was preaching on the words, "He that is not with me is against me," &c. A person was present who had made an engagement to go on a pleasure excursion to Nahant, but, on hearing who was to preach, deferred it until afternoon. When the text was announced, he comforted himself with the thought

that the sermon would be to professors, and that none of it would apply to him. But he soon found, from the view the preacher was taking of his subject, that he was mistaken. At length the preacher said, "There are no neuters in this war: 'he that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.'" When these words were pronounced, they were like an electric stroke. He thought (and thought aloud, for, unconsciously, he spoke the words), "Good God! is this my case? Am I an enemy to thee and opposed to thy cause?" He trembled, sighed, and would have fallen from his seat had he not been supported. The attention of the congregation was arrested, and many thought he was taken in a fit. The minister paused, perceived his situation, left the pulpit and went to the pew, conversed and prayed with him, and then went into the pulpit and resumed his discourse to a congregation who were as silent and solemn as the shadow of death. Mr. A. continued a few days in distress, but was brought to experience peace in believing in Christ Jesus our Lord. An astonishing change took place in his whole deportment: he gave an evidence of real and deep piety. He lived a holy and happy life for one year, and died a peaceful and triumphant death; and in twelve months from the Sabbath of his conviction, in the same house, was his funeral sermon preached by the Rev. Enoch Mudge, from Zech., iii., 2: "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

While the subject of our narrative was growing rapidly in the esteem of the Church and the public, it is delightful to notice his deep humility. In his familiar letters to his nearest friends there is not to be found a single expression indicative of conscious superiority, nor any of those expressions by which, under a thin veil of modesty, many contrive to eulogize themselves. He had a low estimate of his piety. "I do feel an evidence," he says, "that Jesus is my friend. I know it is nothing in me; for I have an humbling sense of my past wanderings and my present unworthiness. O, that I could ever lie at the foot of the cross, and adore that Saviour who has done so much for me! I say *so much*; for, though I discover my attainments to be but small to what

they might have been if I had not buried my Lord's talent, yet they are large compared with my deserts. What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."

And again: "My preaching seems not to be attended with that power I could wish. The people are too easy under the word. I have a wish to see the word preached 'sharper than any two-edged sword.' O that God would make me more faithful in the ministry and more successful. I know not that I could exert myself more than I do. I endeavour to be in season and out of season." * * * "But faith is too weak in all I do. Too few listen to the sound of the Gospel. O my God! what shall I do to save souls?"

And again, in the little sketch of himself before spoken of, written probably about this time, he observes, "My greatest affliction on this subject is, that the people where I labour, and my brethren in the ministry, from a knowledge of my having had the advantage of a public education, expect more of me than they find in me. They find many others, with not half my advantages, go before me in the excellence and usefulness of their performances. And the greater their expectations, the greater their disappointment, and the lower I sink in their estimation. But this is good for my naturally ambitious heart. It enables me to take an instructive lesson in humility of him who has said, 'Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly.' Lord help me to 'become a fool that I may be made wise.' And if I glory in aught, let it be in my infirmities."

The following letters belong to this period of our subject's life.

"Feb. 11th, 1819.

"To Miss PROX.

* * * "Unless, by the grace of God, I get the victory over those corruptions, and am liberated from that burden of sin of which you complain, I never expect to meet my God in peace. I fear we, many of us, rest short of the Christian's standard. 'There is, therefore, now, no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.' Permit me, my dear R., to ask, Is it

a necessary part of the Christian experience to feel sin mixed with all that we do? Are we not taught to believe that 'whosoever committeth sin is of the devil?' I do not mention this to prove that a Christian never sins, but to show that sin is of the devil, and it is the Christian's privilege to be free from its condemning power. But you are freed, you think, by the imputed righteousness of Christ. Ah, my dear R., what are we to understand by this? Will you ask yourself the question, 'What do I mean by the imputed righteousness of Christ?' and see if you can find a satisfactory answer. Do you mean that Christ's obedience to the law is imputed to you, whether you are obedient or not? This is the rankest Antinomianism, and, it is believed, cannot be supported by the Scripture. Take care that by such doctrine you do not strengthen the hands of the Universalist, who under this plea dreams of Heaven, while living in open rebellion to God. But perhaps you will say, 'We must strive to obey;' and if we do, shall we not, through Christ, be enabled to succeed? Can we not 'do all things through Christ that strengtheneth us?' Has God taught us to pray, 'Lord, create me a *clean heart*, and renew a right spirit within me,' and yet taught us not to expect that this prayer will be answered? Is 'Christ's blood sufficient to cleanse from all sin,' and yet never applied for that purpose? My dear friend, I do not ask you to go to the writings of any learned doctor in divinity to learn the blessings of the Gospel—go to some humble and devout soul, that has experienced them in full. Go to your Bible, and there learn that Christ wills you not to bondage, but to liberty. Go to your *God*, and pray for victory over your enemies—for an abiding witness of the spirit—for that perfect love that casteth out all fear. I mention not these things to establish any particular doctrine, but that you may enjoy all that is your privilege. I know, if you were freed from the shackles of education, your pious, Heaven-born soul would, by God's assistance, emerge from the thralldom of inbred corruption into the glorious liberty of the sons of God, and sing experimentally,

'O glorious hope of perfect love,
It lifts me up to things above.'

"But I shall dwell too long upon this interesting subject. May God help us both to reflect upon it, and search the Scriptures to see if these things be so."

"Craftsbury, 23d April, 1819.

"TO A LADY.—MY DEAR SISTER,

"You have, no doubt, often inquired, 'Why is it that God, while he is cheering others with the sunbeams of his presence, has seen fit to envelop me in darkness? Why am I left to that sickness of the heart which arises from hope deferred?' I have made this same inquiry, even on my knees, while pleading with God in your behalf. 'Lord, why is it that our sister must suffer so much? Why must she go mourning from month to month, and no lasting ray of comfort beam upon her soul? "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" Was "religion ever designed to make our pleasures less?" Was it not given to make the soul happy? Why, then, does it not, in this instance, have its designed effect? As a proof of the efficacy of thy Gospel; as a proof of the excellency of the pleasures of religion over those of the world; as a mark of thy benevolence towards the work of thy hands, to render happy a poor trembling soul, dependant on thy mercy, appear in mercy to our sister, and whisper peace to her soul.' To these prayers I receive something like the following answers: 'Short-sighted mortal! To prove the efficacy of my Gospel, if any other proof were wanted besides *my revealed Word*, you have many witnesses even in this place and among this people. These can, most of them, testify to the excellency of the pleasures of religion over those of the world. As to my benevolence towards my creatures, the countless mercies that I daily bestow upon them establish it beyond the necessity of farther proof. You have proof of my good-will even in the case of her in whose behalf you plead. To what is it owing but to my mercy that she is now out of hell? Why has she any desire, more than she had in former years, to flee the wrath to come, but because I have granted unto her the gracious influences of my Spirit? You plead for her that she may enjoy happiness, and

spend the days of her sojourning here with joy. It is true my religion was given to man for his enjoyment. Not barely for the enjoyment of the moment, but for his lasting good, his eternal happiness. "My people are a tried people." They "come up through great tribulation, and (thus) wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb." This subject of your prayers is in my hands; she is under my particular providence. I am not a stranger to her sighs. I count her tears, and mark the throbs of her anxious breast. If she continue to struggle with the waves, if she keep herself unspotted from the world, if she attend faithfully to her duty, these shall not be in vain. Know ye not the promises: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Blessed are ye that weep now, for ye shall laugh." "I see not as man seeth." I try the reins. I penetrate the secrets of the heart. I see not only what is and what will be, but also what might have been, under every possible variety of circumstance. Such is the disposition, and such the peculiar besetments of some of my creatures, that, in mercy to them, and for the eternal good of their souls, I chasten them, and withhold from them the evidence of my approbation. But let them not therefore despair. I am still mindful of them. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she would not have compassion on the fruit of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee." "Behold, I have graven thee on the palms of my hands." Let them, then, continue to seek me with an humble heart. Let them be jealous over themselves, and look with faith to their Saviour, and in due time "I will give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." They, as the "ransomed of the Lord, shall return and come to Zion with songs of everlasting joy upon their heads; they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." It is only in this way, my dear sister, that the Lord hath hitherto been pleased to answer my prayers. Thus the real cause of your mourning is still left out of sight. Want of faith and trust in Christ may be one cause; but there may be others. Shall I suggest *one*? You possess naturally a strong desire to please. This is commendable, and, when kept within proper bounds, may

add much to the pleasures of society, and even to one's usefulness in life. But it should be exercised in a proper way, and governed by Gospel rules, otherwise this desire to please will lead to such compliances as would prove destructive to the spirit of devotion, and thus open the way to greater evils. Possessed with a lively disposition, a social turn, and a wish to render yourself acceptable to all, I have often thought, if you had been blessed with that *ease* of mind which many enjoy before you had been taught the wiles of Satan, you might have been led away, step by step, till you had lost your confidence, your religion, your soul ! When you have sufficiently learned the Gospel lesson, that there is no other way to enjoy religion but by separation from the world, by watching over your words and ways, then perhaps God will lift upon you the light of his countenance. Submit yourself, then, to God. Commit yourself to him in well-doing, believing that he is the rewarder, sooner or later, of all who diligently seek him."

To his Sister.

"Charlestown, Nov. 20, 1819.

* * * * *

"I think my confinement proved a blessing to me. I find every grace must be tried. I had previously been sorely tempted for some weeks in various ways. And because the infirmities of the body sometimes weighed down the soul, Satan would say, 'You have lost the blessing you received at Wellfleet' (for he was not permitted to say I received none). However, in the midst of these and various other temptations, which caused me to be 'in heaviness,' my faith was not moved from its object. But this seemed to be my state. In the work of sanctification upon the heart there appears to be two distinct operations : one is, to empty the soul of sin and everything offensive ; and another is, to fill it with love. 1. The strong man armed is bound and cast out. 2. The stronger takes possession. These are sometimes effected at once, and sometimes there is a period elapses between them.* God was pleased, however, in my case, to empty and fill at the same moment. But to try my

* A person who has experienced the former need never fear ; for if he persevere, the latter *will* follow.

faith, or for some other purpose, that fulness was after a while occasionally withdrawn. Still, I could not discover that there was anything in my heart *contrary* to the will of God. In this situation, Satan assailed me. Then I had reason to thank God for fathers and mothers in the Church that could both instruct me and pray for me, but more especially that Jesus was my friend; for I felt him so. I prayed the Lord to fill me and sink me into his will before I left my chamber. The Lord heard. O, my sister, what a blessed Saviour we have! 'He saves his people *from* their sins.' He fills them with his fulness. It was not that ecstasy of animation which I have sometimes felt, but it was a holy sinking into the will of God. Often, ever since that time, while I am sitting in my chamber, looking at what the Saviour has done for me and for the world, 'my heart is dissolved in thankfulness, and my eyes melted to tears.' My best hours are in retirement, holding communion with my Saviour. At these times I think of you, in your seclusion from the world, and think what blessings you may enjoy if you seek and obtain all that is your privilege. Every day I bear your case to our Heavenly Father. O, sister! be in earnest. You must be holy; but it will cost you a struggle. Though you have not wandered as far as I did, yet you continued too long a 'slain witness.' But perhaps the Lord will bring you in a way you have not known. Leave with him entirely the manner how, and the means by which you are to be brought. Ask the Lord for just what you want: a victory over inbred corruption, a fulness of love, an abiding witness of the Spirit. Stop not to debate the question with the enemy whether you were ever converted. The question is, What do I want? And, when you have discovered your wants, carry them to Him in whom all fulness dwells—to Jesus. The very name, sinful and unworthy as you may feel yourself, will afford you encouragement. What says the angel? 'Thou shalt call his name Jesus.' Why, heavenly messenger, why call his name Jesus? 'Because *he shall save his people from their sins.*' What a significant name! What an encouraging name! What a sweet-sounding name!"

L

"December 1st, 1819.

"To Miss PECK,

"You express, my dear friend, great anxiety of mind, because you fear that you love God from selfish motives. It is true, we should always examine ourselves and try our hearts; but Satan, my dear, may harass us both ways. We have a God of mercy and of wisdom, who knows how to suit his requirements to the radical principles of our moral constitution. He does not require us to love Him, considered abstractly from our own happiness. He has been graciously pleased, in all his requirements, intimately and inseparably to connect our own happiness with His declarative glory. And what right have we to separate them? Indeed, we cannot separate them; nor does God require it. He always wishes us to look forward to the prize. This supports us under afflictions, and cheers us in our journey. So David looked back upon what God had done for him as a motive to love. I will love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplication.—Psalm cxvi., 1. So Moses looked forward to an expected reward; for it is written (Hebrews, xi., 25, 26) that he 'chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season: esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.' Why? 'For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.' That self-love which leads you to please self at the expense of your obedience to God is highly reprehensible. This kind of self must be denied, for the fruit of it is not love to God. Love to God is something that can be FELT in the soul, something that Satan himself cannot counterfeit. If you have this genuine love, you know it. Do not, my dear, suffer the enemy to harass and disturb you on account of your motives in loving God. None but a good motive can induce you to love God in his true character. Any motive, then, that leads to this, lay hold of. Is your heart melted into tenderness and love while contemplating what the Saviour has done for you? Is your soul transported with delight, from a view, by faith, of an expected paradise? Let these be motives to draw you on to love and obedience. This will bring you

nearer to God ; consequently, brighten your prospects ; and these, again, will increase your love. Thus you will go on from grace to grace, and from glory to glory, 'until faith shall be swallowed up in sight, and hope lost in full fruition !' O the depth of God's wisdom and mercy towards us ! For such a glorious plan, 'bless the Lord, O my soul ; and all that is within me, bless and praise His holy name.' "

To the Same.

" February 21st, 1820.

" On the subject of loving God 'for what he is in and of himself,' you have quoted a passage which seems to convey the idea that we ought to, and can love God, even if he do not love us. According to my view of the subject, I could no more love a God that did not love me, than reconcile the widest contradictions. It is in him I (spiritually) 'live, and move, and have my being.' I love him, because Jesus is formed in me the hope of glory. I love him as he has communicated himself to me. What he has not communicated I know nothing about. By faith we become one with him. And so far as this oneness exists, so far we *love* him, so far we enjoy him, and so far we are made partakers of the same nature ; and this is why we love him, because he has imparted to us his nature, which is love. But on this ground, my dear, we will not contend ; only let us *love* him—*love* him with *all* our *heart*. The simplest peasant, that cannot decide any metaphysical question about motives, can, if born of God, say, 'By this I know that I love him, by the spirit which he has given me.' "

To a Lady who had presented him with an Umbrella.

" Charlestown, February 8th, 1820.

" I return my sincere acknowledgments to you for the *last*, as well as for all *former* favours conferred upon me, and can only wish that the object of your benevolence was more deserving. But I have one consolation, when the favours of my friends make me, more sensibly than ever, feel my unworthiness. It is this : whatever becomes of me, they will not lose their reward ; for our Lord says, 'Whoever

gives a cup of cold water in the *name* of a disciple, shall not lose his reward.' However undeserving the person favoured may be, yet the design and intention of the person conferring the favour shall secure to him his reward. In this view of the subject, I rejoice at every act which manifests a desire to promote the temporal welfare of the professed messengers of peace. 'Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to *their* account.'—Philippians, iv., 17. 'But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again. Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content' (v. 10, 11). But when I consider my own unworthiness, my own unprofitableness in the cause of Christ, I wonder that I am blessed with the crumbs that fall from my Master's table; and yet he is continually feeding me with children's bread. When I consider the suffering life my Master led, the privations and hardships which he endured,

" 'I blush in all things to abound;
The *servant* is above his *Lord*.'

"I assure you, these are not the unmeaning expressions of a '*voluntary humility*;' they are the heartfelt sentiments of my soul. What has God done for me, and how little have I done for him! While I write my eyes are melted to tears at the reflection. He called me in my youth to serve him;

" 'And when, like wandering sheep, I strayed,
He brought me to his fold again;'

and, after a life of disobedience, he still blesses me. When I reluctantly entered into his vineyard, he nevertheless blessed me, and still continues his favours. He gives me favour in the eyes of the people, and, what is more, opens their hearts to hear the Word, and gives me a hope that these will one day shine as stars in my crown of rejoicing. Among that number I trust you will be one. If you continue to press forward after holiness of heart, you will undoubtedly be among the number. O Lord! if in that day of rejoicing I am thus crowned, I will only receive that crown to cast it at Thy feet, and 'cry with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.'

"But I began to make my grateful acknowledgments to you. What shall I say? While in life's journey you have to pass through scorching heat and sultry blasts, may *you* ever find yourself *sheltered* by Him who is 'the *shadow* of a great rock in a weary land.' Whenever you are assailed by the floods of temptation and the storms of malice, may Christ be your *shelter* from the stormy blast. And, finally, when God shall rain 'an horrible tempest' upon an ungodly world, may he *spread* his *canopy* over you, and may 'his *banner* over you be love.' May your name be found 'graven upon the palms of his hands,' and impressed in unfading character's on the Lamb's fair Book of Life. These are the prayers which your much obliged friend and brother will put up, when, for his own convenience, he makes use of your highly-prized present for a shelter or a shade.

"May God help us both to live for him, and him alone, the few revolving suns we have to spend on earth; and then, as we pass along, we can sing,

" 'No burning heats by day,
Nor blasts of wintry air,
Can take my health away
If God be with me there.
Thou art my sun,
And thou my *shade*,
To guard my head
By night or noon.'

"And when we leave this earth, we shall go to those healthful shores

" 'Where chilling winds and poisonous breath
Are felt and feared no more ;'

where no drenching torrents nor burning suns will afflict us; for the air will be cooled only by the refreshing breezes from Zion's Hill, and illuminated by the mild and shining rays of the Sun of Righteousness.

"Pray that I may ever be kept humble and useful, and I will reckon *that* not the least among the favours conferred upon your unworthy friend and brother in Christ."

CHAPTER IV.

Charlestown continued.—Calumny.—Sickness.—State of Mind.—Returns to Vermont.—Letters.—Sketch of Character.

THE New-England Conference, to which Mr. Fisk was attached, met this year on the 20th of June, at Nantucket. Here he was admitted into full connexion, and ordained a deacon. He was reappointed to Charlestown, where he immediately resumed his labours.

This year also he attended the Commencement of Brown University, and at the particular solicitation of his friends, for he was very indifferent about it himself, he took his degree of Master of Arts.

Soon after his return he wrote to Miss Peck as follows :

“ Charlestown, September 18th, 1820.

“MY DEAR R.,

“ I returned home the day I parted with you, but not in time to attend to my meeting in the afternoon ; and was so fatigued with the warm, dusty, and tiresome passage, that I was unfit for the duties of the evening. I believe I must enjoin it upon you not to solicit me again to stay beyond my appointed time. My head and ear were very troublesome and painful for some days after I returned, but have now almost recovered. I find my little flock for the most part well, engaged, and united ; had an excellent season yesterday in preaching to them, especially in the morning, while impressing upon them the necessity of heart-holiness, of waging a war of extermination with their internal enemies, and of pleading constantly for the holy doctrines of the cross. I thought at the close, ‘ I wish my dear R. could have been present.’ But perhaps my arguments on that subject would not have been to her very weighty. I have, however, to make one request of you, and that is, that you would examine the Scriptures with prayerful attention with regard to the subject of a deeper work of grace : especially examine

those passages that relate to a death to sin and to a life of faith : such are, Romans, vi., 2, 6, 7, 11, 12, &c. ; Galatians, ii., 20, and vi., 14, with many others. Also those that relate to cleansing : such are, 2 Corinthians, vii., 1 ; Hebrews, x., 22 ; 2 Peter, i., 4 ; 1 John, i., 7 ; Hebrews, ix., 14 ; 1 Thessalonians, v., 23. Also those that relate to being filled with God, with the Spirit, &c. : such are, Ephesians, iii., 19, and v., 18 ; Acts, xiii., 52. And when you have examined these, ask yourself whether most of those professing Christians with whom you are acquainted walk by this rule. Are they dead to the world ? Are they alive to God ? Are they cleansed from sin ? Has the old leaven been purged out ? Does it appear that God dwells in them ? Are they filled with his Spirit ? Perhaps it may be said they are seeking and striving to walk by this rule. Some of them, I trust, are ; but we have reason to fear most of those who have named the name of Christ do not thus strive. Unless living according to the course of this world, pleading for sin in heart, and sinful indulgences in life ; unless contending for the form, but denying the power ; setting the affections on things below, and not on things above ; trusting to past experience without a present witness ; unless indulging sinful tempers, unholy desires, and worldly propensities, is death to the world, is the life of faith, is purification from sin, is being filled with the Spirit of God, we have reason to fear there are quite too many that neither walk by this rule, nor are striving so to do. When reflecting upon this subject, I am often constrained to ask, with fear and anxiety, ‘ Lord, are there few that be saved ? ’ And then, turning to myself, I ask, with still more solicitude, Lord, shall I be among that few ? And while writing to you, as I feel your interests closely connected with mine, leaving all others to stand or fall to their own master, I ask, Shall we be among that few ? O my God, if the soul is once lost, it is forever gone. And, my dear, what are our hearts ? Is pride remaining ? Is a disposition to please the world, to attend to worldly trifles, to seek for worldly ease, to talk of worldly things, prevailing in our breasts ? How unfit a residence is the soul for the Holy Spirit ! ”

While in Charlestown our subject passed through a fiery ordeal. By some means the most vile slanders were put in circulation touching his moral character. The precise circumstances I have not been able to ascertain; nor is it worth inquiry, since his innocence was fully attested by the subsequent confession of the slanderer, which was read before the public congregation.* Yet such was the effect of the calumny, that for a time it threatened the destruction of his usefulness. His congregations decreased; many lost confidence in him; and so far had some gone, that, even after the confession of the traducer, they would never hear him again. It is a wonderful Providence that permits the usefulness of good men to be sometimes interrupted by such groundless calumnies. But St. Athanasius, John Bunyan, and the "judicious" Hooker had the same charge brought against them, with about as much truth as in the case of the faithful Joseph or the chaste Susannah.

Some of his trials were rather diverting, and only served to show his invincible sweetness of disposition, as well as his tact in dealing with men. The vicious young men of the place, sometimes standing in groups in the streets, when they saw him coming would make a passage, and, in evident mock civility, take off their hats; but he, seeming to consider it all in earnest, returned the salutation by taking off his! Finding they could not irritate him, they soon grew tired of the joke.

But Mr. Fisk's labours were now destined to meet with a sudden and protracted interruption. He had laboured far beyond the limit of prudence. He frequently preached thrice on the Sabbath, twice or thrice through the week, attended meeting of some kind every evening, and generally visited several (often eight or ten) families a day for religious conversation and prayer. No frame could long endure to have the mind kept in such a constant state of tension. His mode of life did not allow him time enough for the bodily exercise requisite to maintain the degree of strength such mental exertions demand. It is very much to be regretted that the habits of many studious men are so at variance with the

* The confession is now before me, signed with his own name. He renewed, when on his death-bed, this confession to Mr. Fisk.

laws of health. They go on the erroneous theory that all time is lost which is not devoted to their chosen pursuit, forgetting that no time is really lost which is increasing our capacity for happiness and usefulness, and that this capacity depends upon the proportionate development of all our faculties, moral, intellectual, and physical.*

Mr. Fisk had already suffered severely while in Charlestown from catarrhal affections ; but in the month of November of this year (1820), while as well as usual in other respects, he was suddenly seized with a copious hemorrhage from the lungs, which returned five several times, so that he was confined to his chamber, and a good share of the time to his bed, until the following March. During this period his life seemed to hang on a vapour. His physicians gave him up, and his father was sent for to be present at the closing scene. But on the very night when his friends were gathered round his bed, and expecting every moment to be his last, his Church, with the churches in Boston, including some of other denominations, were engaged in solemn and importunate prayer for his recovery. The meetings were called in special reference to his case ; and He who said "the prayer of faith shall save the sick," rebuked the disor-

* The devoted Payson gave some very good advice, piquantly expressed, to a student in Divinity on the preservation of his health.

"A merciful man," he says, "is merciful to his beast, and you must be merciful to your beast, or, as Mr. M. would say, to your 'animal.' Remember that it is your Master's property ; and he will no more thank you for driving it to death, than an earthly master would thank a servant for riding a valuable horse to death under pretence of zeal for his interest. The truth is, I am afraid Satan has jumped on to the saddle ; and when he is there, in the guise of an angel of light, he whips and spurs at a most unmerciful rate, as every joint in my poor broken-winded animal can testify from woful experience. * * * Remember Mr. Brainard's remark, that diversions, rightly managed, increased rather than diminished his spirituality. I now feel that I am never serving our Master more acceptably than when, for his sake, I am using means to preserve my health and lengthen my life. * * * Ride, then, or go a fishing, or employ yourself in any way which will exercise the body gently without wearying the mind." But alas for human wisdom ! Had Dr. Payson followed the advice he gave, he might, possibly, have blessed the world with his labours for many years longer. Yet, when recommended to take a sea-voyage for the benefit of his health, his reply was that he "had not time !" The most lavish waste of time is sapping the constitution ; for it is hurrying to a premature grave. But the importance of these views, unfortunately, are often not appreciated until it is too late to profit by them.

der. His symptoms began to improve from that night. Mr. Fisk always believed that he was raised up in answer to prayer.

It is a rather too common opinion among Christians that the test of progress in piety consists in an increase of sensible enjoyment in religion. But joy in Christ is only one of the "fruits of the Spirit," and it is the one which depends most on natural causes. The state of the health, particularly of the nervous system, agreeable circumstances, the natural temperament, and the peculiar quality of the imagination, greatly modify the susceptibility of joyous emotion. Hence the increase of joy is, of itself, no certain proof of growth in grace. The sure marks of this are, increased knowledge of ourselves, victory over sin, deadness to the world, improvement in Christian tempers. In these the Christian often advances most rapidly under comparative depression. "Now, if need be," said an apostle, "ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." For he is then constrained to cry out, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The following passages will show that, though he was not always "filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all his tribulation," yet he was growing* in the vital elements

* That excellent and useful writer, Miss Hannah More, in one of her tracts, but not the most judicious of them, says that Christian perfection would exclude all farther growth in grace. I answer her from a dignitary of her own Church, to whose opinions her admirers will pay more respect than to mine. After describing a perfect Christian, much as Mr. Wesley would, he shows that "Reason and Scripture press us on towards an endless progress in virtue. Such a degree of excellence to which nothing can be added; such a height, above which there is no room to soar, if applied to man and this world, is surely but an imaginary notion. To dream of such a perfection were to forget our nature and our state; no sagacity of judgment, no strength of resolution, no felicity of circumstances, can ever advance us to this height. Such a perfection as this, that is incapable of any increase, belongs to God alone. It is hard to conceive how we should enjoy divine faith without growing in spiritual wisdom and understanding; it is hard to conceive how we should give God, the world, and ourselves repeated proofs of our integrity in the day of trial, without increasing our strength and assurance; and love must naturally increase with these. Whence it is that St. Paul, acknowledging himself not yet perfect,* resolves that, "For-

* That is, in this sense; for in the other sense he says, "Let us, as many as be perfect."

of piety. His "affliction, though not joyous, but grievous, afterward yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness."

"March 20, 1821.

"To Miss PECK.

"You will help me to *thank* God for his *mercy to me in sickness*, for temporal and spiritual comforts. Gratitude ought to swell my heart to God and my many kind friends. I trust I am not insensible to the renewed obligations I am under. But we are frail mortals; we know not our strength until it is tried. I have learned some new lessons of my own frail heart in this sickness, which I trust will be useful to me in life or death, by helping me to keep at the Saviour's feet. *Nowhere else* are we safe. I sometimes get a glimpse of that *humility, purity, and holiness* with which a minister of the blessed Jesus should be clothed, and *its loveliness* ravishes my very soul, and sinks me in the dust before *him*, in view of my own nothingness; and I strive to plead with him to put *this comeliness on me, even worthless me*. O, my dear R., pray much for your unworthy W.; pray not so much for my life and health as for an increase of godliness in my soul, that I may be ripening into a meetness for all the will of God. Shall I retrace my steps to life and health, and *forget* that I have been where I could almost see the realities of the eternal world? Forbid it, Heaven! Rather let the solemnities of eternity rest upon me, 'so that I may finish my course with joy;' and, if spared, 'the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God.'"

During Mr. Fisk's illness the following characteristic incident occurred: A gentleman who greatly admired his preaching called to see him. Mr. Fisk inquired of him if he had heard the young minister preach who occasionally supplied his place in the pulpit. The gentleman replied in the affirmative, signified his gratification, and, by way of getting those things that are behind, and reaching forward to those that are before, he would press on towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil., iii., 13, 14).—Dr. LUCAS's *Inquiry after Happiness*, part iii., sect. ii., ch. vi.

confirming it, added that he preached "almost as well as Mr. Fisk." The invalid immediately raised his languid eyes, and with a deep sigh, in a most impressive tone, replied, "That is saying very little in his favour; for I am willing to sit at any man's feet who preaches the Gospel."

The following extract from a letter will show his feelings in view of his prospects.

"I despair of being able to preach much this season, if at all. O, my dear friend, what a useless being I am becoming to myself and every one else. But it is the Lord, and I ought not to, I cannot complain. He does not stand in need of my poor services; or if he do, he can supply them with the labour of another, who will be more faithful and successful in cultivating his vineyard, and more careful to render him the fruit in its season. Yet I must confess, though I know I am not worthy to be a doorkeeper in the house of God, or even to wash the saints' feet, it would be a great cross to me not to be actively engaged in the cause of Christ. Until I began to labour in the Lord's vineyard, my life was a restless, anxious scene; but when I began the ministry, I got home, where my soul could exercise and rest with satisfaction. But in the midst of all I was checked. When I had reconnoitred the enemy's camp, had estimated their strength, meditated on the best mode of attack, exercised myself to some little purpose in the Gospel armour, and began to calculate with no small confidence, that by the grace of God I should be able to do some injury to the foe, *disease* came, and, like a messenger of God, said, 'Thou shalt not go up against this people to battle!' O Lord! with submission I throw myself at thy feet, and plead with thee; if it can be thy will, if it will be for the good of thy Church and my own soul, if there be any humble employment where a worm can serve thee, 'here am I, send me.' 'But O! Father, not my will, but thine be done.'"

The latter part of May Mr. Fisk left Charlestown for his father's house, which by slow and easy stages he reached in safety on the 25th of June. On the way he wrote a letter, from which we extract a passage, to his good friend Mrs. Goodwin, whose four daughters were seals of his ministry in Charlestown.

Speaking of attending a love-feast the evening before, he proceeds : “ *We*, I say, as though I was something in the meeting ; but, in truth, I am *nothing*. I never was much, but still I find it a hard lesson to learn to be *nothing*. But such I am, and such I am likely to be at present ; yea, though I had my strength and health as usual, yet I see that I should be almost of no consequence in this world. It is not that I wish to decry myself that I thus speak ; but this proud, this once ambitious and aspiring heart, has learned by severe lessons ‘to shrink into itself and be a fool.’ But, sin excepted, I am what the Lord made me ; and if he can use me in any way for his glory, he shall have the praise. ‘I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God,’ than to arrive at all the honours of the world.

“ My health is as good as when I left C., and I think my strength is increasing. But my journey seems a mountain. I hope, however, by the strength of God, to get over it in some way, as, indeed, I shall get over the whole journey of life soon. O ! who would live in this world forever ? Contending with difficulties that require all our skill and resolution to meet and overcome ; putting up with inconveniences at every turn ; parting with friends that wring the heart, and fighting with foes that would destroy the soul—these form the business of life. But let us not, like cowards, wish to desert our posts before we are regularly discharged ; but ‘all our appointed time,’ let us ‘wait until our change come.’ ‘Happy is that servant whom, when his Lord cometh,’ he shall find so doing !”

Having now arrived at a pause in our history, we shall embrace the opportunity to present some of Mr. Fisk’s leading characteristics as a preacher and a man.

His discourses generally were more in the nature of homilies than sermons, being rather explications of texts than discussions of topics. His subjects were judiciously chosen, being such as were adapted to the wants of his people rather than to the most favourable exhibition of his own powers. He does not appear to have been at any loss for a suitable variety of pulpit materials. His own heart, deeply interested as it was in the welfare of his hearers, helped to

furnish this variety ;* but, as an assistance, he kept a list of such texts as struck him with any peculiar force. A book lies before me with not less than four hundred texts written fully out. His aim in preaching was evidently not to startle by novelty, nor amaze by profundity, nor bewilder by abstruseness ; but to " commend himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God," and be the instrument of bringing sinners to piety, and the pious to holiness.

Hence all his aims at the intellect had an ultimate bearing upon the heart and conscience. He kept his own mind in contact with that of his hearers by addressing them in the second person rather than in the third : he preached to them, not ABOUT them, nor about mankind in general. He seldom employed abstract or logical terms, and his reasoning, therefore, was more popular than scholastic. His manner was rather that of a lawyer endeavouring to convince a jury, than that of a professor instructing a class. If he struck a chord that vibrated, he followed up the impression, touched and retouched it with delicacy and skill, until his audience was often melted down under the power of his eloquence. He frequently preached with tears, and was sometimes overwhelming. It was not unusual for the guilty to cry out under his preaching when pierced by " the two-edged sword." Sometimes the outcry, though equally complimentary, perhaps, to his eloquence, was not so gratifying to his piety. On one occasion, while preaching with great enlargement on the final judgment of the wicked, a man rose as in a phrensy, stamped upon the floor, and with a horrible oath rushed out of the house. His sermons, as the reader has seen from his " Resolutions," were well studied ; they were regularly thought through, and systematically arranged ; but he greatly eschewed the practice of memorizing, or preaching from notes. He did not take a scrap with him into the pulpit. Writing to his friend after a season of great liberty in preach-

* "The heart acquires by piety and devotion, dispositions and sentiments which render the inventive powers fertile, and clothe the effusions of the soul with a felicity of expression that cannot fail to interest the people, because it is the heart that speaks. On the contrary, whatever does not proceed from the heart is seldom more than affectation ; '*invita Minerva*,' it is contrary to nature." —*Ostervald on the Composition and Delivery of a Sermon*, section 9.

ing, he observes, "O, Mr. Taft, I would not have been shackled with notes on any account. It seemed as if my mouth was filled with arguments suited to the *tone* of feeling *then* excited in the people. There was weeping throughout the house, and a solemn awe seemed to rest upon the people."* His manner had not, at this period, so far as I can learn, the polish it subsequently acquired. He was often too loud and violent. His style was sufficiently correct for an extemporaneous preacher to meet the demands of good taste, yet there was no such studied attention to the minor elegances as indicate an undue solicitude to please, and thus create a distrust of the preacher's sincerity or singleness of purpose. It was evident to all that Mr. Fisk's preaching was

"Warm from the heart, and faithful to its fires."

Of his reading at this time but little information has been received. Practical and devotional books, however, formed a suitable share of it. This, to a minister, is of absolute importance, since his preaching and conversation must be fashioned by his habitual reading and thinking. The products of the mind must be as the aliment it feeds on. Wesley and Fletcher he read a great deal, and never lost his relish for them.

In private life Mr. Fisk always possessed great power over the affections. His temper was singularly kind and sympathizing. His manners were easy, affable, and ingratiating. If he erred here, it was by a familiarity rather too unreserved and indiscriminate. He has himself acknowledged that he suffered some embarrassment from this cause, but in what particular way or to what extent I have not been informed. He was habitually grave; yet his gravity was softened by a gentle pleasantry, a peculiar vein of delicate humour, that rendered his company and conversation always attractive. Hence his deep piety wore an aspect of great loveliness. It was a frequent saying among the young people, "If I could be such a Christian as Mr. Fisk, I should like to be religious."

* This passage was called forth by a previous conversation, in which Mr. Fisk endeavoured to convince Mr. Taft of the superior effect of extemporaneous over written sermons.

He was always very fond of children ; he regarded them as the lambs of Christ's flock, and therefore paid them particular attention, talked much to them, prayed for them, and interested himself in their welfare. As a natural consequence, they in return were warmly attached to him. Some pleasing illustrations of this feature in his character have come to our knowledge. Take the following as a specimen : Mrs. Goodwin had two sons, one eight, the other ten years of age. Once, when Mr. Fisk visited them after he had left Charlestown, these little boys might have been seen seated on either side of him, each holding a hand, with their heads reclining on his knee, or occasionally looking up into his face for a word or a smile : and thus they remained more than an hour. Must not the heart have possessed unusual qualities of endearment that could so attract the youthful affections ?

CHAPTER V.

Indisposition.—Letters.—Prosperity of Religion.—Resumes Preaching.

THE period at which we have now arrived was the most painful of Mr. Fisk's ministry. With his mental activity and urgency of feeling, nothing was more distressing than idleness. To see such fields of usefulness before him, making their demands upon human exertion, and not to be able to open his mouth for God, required great self-command. He was laid aside as a broken vessel unfit for use. "I never," he says, writing to a friend many years after, "I never experienced anything more trying than this. To be reconciled to be *nothing*; nay, worse, to be a useless burden to my friends and the world, was an extent of resignation which not only brought into requisition all the little grace I had, but forced me to pray earnestly for more." Thus the season was not entirely lost to him. Though excluded from active usefulness, he was gaining greater knowledge of his own heart, greater depth and maturity of character, and laying up wisdom for future emergencies.

He spent his time in riding on horseback, visiting his friends, reading, writing, and talking, as his strength would permit. Study he could not for some time, at least to any great amount; nor engage in vocal prayer, even at the family altar. Yet it was not possible for such a man to be useless. He preached by his example; he instructed by his conversation; he enlightened by the halo of piety that surrounded him. The atmosphere he breathed impregnated other spirits; while he was blessed, he was likewise blessing.

Meantime, he could instruct from the closet, if not from the pulpit; and he ascended the latter again in a few months, but very cautiously. The following letters are specimens of the instructions afforded by him at this season. The first was written to his aunt, Mrs. Palmer, soon after his arrival at home. She was in feeble health, and somewhat depressed in mind in reference to her spiritual state:

"Lyndon, June 30th, 1821.

* * * "Had it not been for my poor health, I should have written to you before ; but it injures me to write, and I do as little of it as I can. Hearing, however, of your declining health, I cannot delay to write, especially as Marcia mentions that you have some clouds and doubts upon your mind ; and I would by no means be backward at such a time to comfort, as far as I am able, the desponding. I pray, indeed, for your health and life, if this may be for the best ; but these, compared with the health and life of the soul, are trifles. Let me say to you, then, my dear aunt, make Christ your all. Satan never fails, in time of ill health, especially if that illness threatens death, to do his utmost to harass and torment the pious mind. The soul feels the force of these temptations, and it begins to look around for relief ; and, strange as it may seem, it is nevertheless a truth, that persons of long Christian experience too frequently, at such times, begin to look upon wrong objects. And this, instead of relieving them, serves but to increase their distress. They look, perhaps, upon their past experience. 'Perhaps I am deceived.' 'Did I ever experience a change ?' They look, perhaps, upon their own unworthiness : 'Shall I ever get to Heaven ?' But what are all these things to the soul at such a time ? What is it to the soul now, whether it has or has not, at some former period, tasted that the Lord was gracious ? If it has, and has not the present witness, it will not satisfy. Not a past *interview*, but a present *union*, will satisfy the mind at this time. Neither will it give a person any *right* to claim blessings *now*, because they have been blessed *once* ; but, while mercy may be found, the soul, in any state, may claim it for *Christ's sake*. Christ is the same *yesterday, to-day, and forever*, professor or non-professor ; those who have been once renewed, and those who were never renewed ; Jew or Gentile, barbarian or Scythian ; worthy in their own estimation, or unworthy ; rich or poor, sick or well, all must come to Christ in the same manner ; and as it respects their rights, are on an equality, only with this exception : those who see them-

selves the most wretched, their case the most difficult, themselves the most unworthy, their wants the most pressing, have the best claim, and are the fittest vessels for the Saviour to show his mercy in. Dear aunt, let me exhort you again to take Christ for your *all*. Take him for your worthiness; take him for your righteousness; take, O take him for your sanctification. Perhaps you have been looking within, and have said, All is not pure, therefore I cannot enter into the New Jerusalem. Indeed, you cannot if impure; but Christ will cleanse you, and now he waits to do the work. Only *believe*, and you shall by experience know what that meaneth: 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.' O that God would be with you in every trial, and support you in sickness or health, living or dying. For this you shall have my prayers."

"Craftsbury, August 6th, 1831.

"To Miss PECK.—MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

"I should have answered your last before this, but I was absent from home when it arrived, and I did not receive it until a few days since. During this time I have been much engaged, and have not had a convenient opportunity to write till now. I have been for two weeks on this (Craftsbury) circuit, visiting those children that the Lord gave me as the first fruits of my ministry. I have found it profitable to body and soul: to my body—for the exercise of riding, together with change of scene and pleasant conversation with my friends, gives that tone to the body and mind which is very conducive to health; insomuch that my symptoms are more favourable, and my lungs much stronger than they were: to my soul—for I am much encouraged, and my faith strengthened, to see that a goodly number of those who professed faith in Christ three years ago are not only steadfast, but growing Christians. O, how do I feel obliged to give *myself anew* to God! He has called me, as I believe, to the ministry; he has blessed my feeble labours; he has spared my life; he has raised me from a bed of sickness; he has permitted me once more to visit my friends and Christian brethren here, and rejoice with them in the hope of a

future Heaven. If I am not faithful, if I do not give myself wholly to God, I am, of all others, the most culpable.

"I am sorry to hear that your health is still feeble, but rejoice to learn that you are so well resigned to the dispensations of Providence. My daily prayer is, that God would fit us *both* for all *his will*, and make us *all* he would have us be." * * * "I thank God that for a number of weeks my mind has been free and easy. My future destiny, my duties, my sufferings, my life, my death, my joys, my sorrows, are all with Him; and there I rest them. If I can but enjoy a present evidence that God, through Christ, owns me, it is enough. I know it is difficult to overcome our feelings; but, through Christ strengthening us, it is possible, and *he will help you* to look, not to the things that are seen, but to the things that are unseen and eternal. Our separation may be shorter than we are aware; perhaps we are soon to meet in a better world, if not in this. In all events, if Christ be our portion, all will be well; for 'if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him;' and it is my constant prayer that you may be blessed with every needed grace.

"Your ideas of holiness, as held and experienced by Fletcher and Mrs. Rogers, I believe, are correct. It is the life of God *in the soul*, pervading every part, animating every faculty, engaging every affection; and this life is, through faith in Jesus Christ, our *righteousness* and our *sanctification*; 'for he is made of God, unto us, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! A *gift* that is not laid by out of reach, or reserved for those who receive it without an earnest, but a gift that is *influential, operative, effectual* 'to the pulling down the strongholds of Satan in the heart, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.' May we, my dear, lay hold of this *gift* by faith; may faith keep its hold by *loving* obedience, until it purify the heart and fit us for heaven."

The following acknowledgment of obligation for professional services was addressed to the physician who attended him during his illness in Charlestown:

"Lyndon, Nov. 20th, 1831.

"DEAR SIR,

"The great haste I was in to make my arrangements with all possible despatch to return to Vermont, prevented my seeing you before I left Charlestown. Indeed, I called at your house once after my recovery, but you were absent. My intention was to make my personal acknowledgments to you for your attention and services to me, which, indeed, is but a small return, considering the extent of the favour conferred. It is the least I can do, and I am willing to do anything more that is in my power, and that you will receive. Pecuniary satisfaction you have heretofore refused; and as for *professional* returns, since you do not believe in my divinity, I can do nothing in that line that will be deemed of any service. My prescriptions for your soul, when placed as an offset against your prescriptions for my body, will hardly be considered, I suppose, a *quid pro quo*. Nevertheless, if you believe me sincere in my religion, you cannot wonder if I am anxious that you should become a believer in it. Indeed, sir, I would at least take *as much pains*, not to say more, as you have taken to attend upon me, if I could be instrumentally serviceable to your soul, as you have been to my body.

"If, as you believe, there is nothing in experimental religion; if the soul is but the action of the body; if the former ceases when the latter dies, and there is nothing after, then, indeed, I mistake, but lose nothing; your mistaken patient will in the end fare as well as his more knowing physician. But ah! dreary thought! under such a system, *poor* is the *best*. Better, indeed, to live in the delusive hope of a happy hereafter, than to be under the constant dread of falling into naught. But if my system be true; if the soul is to exist after the dissolution of this body; if it is by nature corrupt, and needs cleansing; diseased, and needs healing; depraved, and needs renewing, in order to qualify it for enjoyment hereafter; if this cleansing, healing, and renewing are to be realized in a course of virtuous seeking and striving, by forsaking sin, by renouncing our own vainly-conceited systems, and hum-

bling ourselves at the feet of the Saviour, then the real Christian has prospects indescribably bright, immeasurably glorious; but yours, dear sir, are colder and darker than dreary annihilation itself. But I did not design, when I began, to preach a sermon; I have been led thus far from the fulness of a heart that is not insensible to favours conferred, and that would gladly seek what it deems the highest interest and welfare of its benefactor. But, to say no more on this subject, I have one favour, Doctor, to ask of you, in addition to the many that I have already received: I hope you will not deny me. It is, that you will procure and read a work written by Berkeley, called *The Minute Philosopher*. I am sure you will be entertained with the book, if you are not instructed. I do not recommend it to you under the idea that your sentiments are the same with many that are there examined; but the same course of reasoning which persons of your sentiments pursue, is there pursued and answered, I think, satisfactorily. Do read it if you can obtain it: if I were in Boston I would try to obtain it for you.

"I should be glad to hear from you, but will not make such a demand upon your time or attention as to ask you to write. Perhaps I owe you an apology for detaining you so long with this.

"Remember me, if you please, to Mrs. B., and to her mother's family if you see them.

"As I believe in the efficacy of prayer, I shall not forget to ask our common Father to reward you a hundred fold in this world for all your kind attentions to me; to lead you into all truth; to give you all the qualifications necessary to make you meet to be a partaker of the inheritance with the saints in light. In the mean time I subscribe myself,

"Sir, your sincere and greatly obliged friend,

"W. FISK.

"Dr. R**** B*****."

In the month of October (1821) he paid a visit to Providence, where he spent some days in company with Miss Peck. Returning, he visited his friends in Charlestown and

Boston, and was much delighted in the latter city at finding a very happy revival of religion in progress. On his return he tarried a short time in his native town, and formed an agreeable acquaintance with the Episcopal clergyman of Guildford, from whom he received an urgent invitation to preach in his church ; but circumstances did not allow it. He also mentions reading Bishop Hobart's address to the clergy of his diocese, with which he was much pleased. These little things are mentioned only to show his liberality of mind, and the readiness with which he saw and admired whatever was good in others, though he did not in all things agree with them. He arrived at his paternal home in good spirits, and somewhat improved by his jaunt.

His state and prospects during the winter are shown in a letter to Miss Peck, dated January 25, 1822 :

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“You have probably heard from me twice since I last wrote, by the letters that I wrote to Brothers Rogers and Taft. From them you have learned that my health continues much as usual ; on the whole, rather better than it was last summer and autumn. It continues much the same still, except that the extreme cold weather has increased my cough. If I stand it through March without a return of the bleeding, I shall hope to regain my former state of health ; but such is the nature of my complaint, and it has been of so long standing, that I have no hope that I shall ever be an effective man in the vineyard of the Lord. I am aware that I shall always need much care over myself, and always be under the necessity of paying much attention to this frail body. I have a hope, however, that I shall not be altogether useless in the Church, with all my infirmities ; but in what way the Lord, in his providence, will see fit to employ me, if he spare my life, I have yet to learn. The employment and station suited to my present state are such as I am now in : a comfortable home, with liberty to divide my time, according to health, weather, and other circumstances, in visiting my friends, preaching, reading, and writing ; but what my brethren will think about my continuing with them, al-

most as an encumbrance, without rendering them much assistance, I know not. I may now be considered as a drone bee, that helps to consume the honey, but gathers none. And perhaps my more efficient and industrious brethren may think I had better leave the hive, especially if there is not a prospect of my becoming more useful soon. However, for myself, I borrow no anxieties about the future. I feel perfectly confident that the God I serve, if I am faithful to him, will go before me to direct my way. I only mention these things, because I think you may wish to know my thoughts and prospects. For *your* sake, I would be glad to state something more *definite* or more encouraging. You see, my dear, we are *still* called upon to live by faith; but *we do know* that *He* in whom *we trust* is *faithful*, and that all things shall work together for good—our eternal good. I know that your feelings would not, any more than mine, permit you willingly to increase the burden of the Church, and therefore we will cheerfully wait the *openings* of *Providence*. Indeed, I am becoming more and more established in that important doctrine: it calms every anxious feeling. Think of it *much*, my dear R.; it will be useful to you through life, under all circumstances.

“May the grace of God dwell in you richly, and direct you in all things, is the prayer of your unworthy but sincerely affectionate
W. FISK.”

The next epistle was addressed to two young ladies—sisters—of his recent charge:

“I beg the privilege of answering your letters in one, as what I wish to communicate to each of you will be generally the same. And first of all, permit me to express the satisfaction I feel in learning from yourselves that you are still engaged in the service of the Lord. ‘I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.’—(3 John, 4.) And this is particularly gratifying to me in my present situation. Laid by, as I measurably am, from active service in the vineyard of the Lord, with but a small prospect of ever being able to labour as I have done, what would be my

pain if I saw the few plants which I have, through grace, been instrumental in planting, withering and dying? On the other hand, if I see them standing fast, growing and bearing fruit, proportionably great will be my joy. Such, my dear sisters, is the joy in you and others of the little society in Charlestown. This joy is increased when I hear you express, as you have done in your letters, a desire for full redemption in the blood of Christ. What shall I say to you to assist you in this good work? Can I say anything that I have not said? I have said to you, scores of times, *believe*, and the blessing is yours.

“1. Believe that it is attainable : and, when you get this degree of faith, *fix* your mind there. After being convinced that this is the doctrine of the Bible, do not suffer the enemy to come in at the time you are struggling for full redemption, and disconcert your mind by suggesting, ‘perhaps there is no such blessing attainable!’ Be assured much is lost by our not holding all we gain. What doth it profit if we gain half our object, and then, while we are thinking of the other half, lose all we have gained? Yet this is the way that too many are in who are seeking to ‘perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.’ The devil quarrels all away from them that they gain, and then they have to begin anew ; and perhaps a number of times, in the course of their experience, they have to begin back to the first principles of the doctrine of sanctification, and learn that such a blessing is attainable. But let us, in our Christian experience, adopt the miser’s maxim : ‘Keep what you get, and get what you can.’ Fasten everything as you go. When you have gained one foot of ground, suffer not your enemy to flatter you out of it, nor reason you out of it, nor frighten you out of it. If you take this course you will constantly gain something ; and, though you have to contend for your ground *inch by inch*, yet all you gain will be yours.

“2. You must not only believe there is such a blessing, but also believe it is for you. The tempter would make you believe, if he could, that your God is a partial God ; that he has a few choice blessings, which he confers upon individuals—preachers, perhaps, and a few others—but they can-

not be obtained by all. But believe him not ; he is dishonouring your God by such a suggestion.

"3. If your case seems the most difficult of any—if it seems almost impossible that such unholy and sinful hearts as yours can be made holy—believe that, the more difficult the case, the more ready the great Physician is to offer his assistance, the more will he be glorified and his grace magnified in your cause. The Lord Jesus delights to search out and afford assistance to the greatest sinners. Is there a woman that has spent all her substance with physicians, and finds no relief ? is there an impotent man, that hath lain a long time at the pool, and not been healed ? is there a Magdalen that has seven devils ?—these are the very cases that our Lord relieves.

"I might go on with my instructions, but, to say all in a few words, go to *Christ* ; take *him* for your *sanctification* and your *all*. And permit me to add one word of caution : While you are striving for more victory, while you are panting for all the fulness of God, do not suppose that nothing is to be enjoyed and nothing can be done till you receive *all* that you are seeking for. Many in this way have laboured, and toiled, and took no spiritual refreshments until they have sunk under their exertions, and for a time given over their pursuit ; but, seeing their need, they have started again, and again exhausted themselves and given over their pursuit, and perhaps given up the object altogether. At any rate, they do not gain so much ground as if they fed themselves as they went along. Saul, at a certain time, in his eagerness to destroy his enemies, prohibited the people from eating, that they might have the more time to destroy their foes ; but the people, in consequence, became faint, and the victory was not so great as if they had eaten freely.—(See 1 Sam., xiv., 24, 28, 29, 30.) But be ye not like them. God has laid no such prohibition upon you. If, as you pursue your spiritual foe, the trees of grace around you are dropping with honey, you may not only take a morsel on the end of your rod, but eat freely, till your soul is satisfied ; and then, not only will your eyes be enlightened, but your souls will be strengthened to pursue your enemies till all are slain.

Fight on and rejoice on. While contending for more ground, cultivate what you have got. This is the way to make your exertions constant and your warfare joyous. O what a glorious combat is this! We triumph while we fight."

" March 14.

" To MRS. GOODWIN.

"I know of nothing very important to communicate to you; but, as you and your daughters have manifested such a deep interest in my welfare, perhaps the old dull and uninteresting subject, self, may not be altogether such to you and yours, especially if he be not put forward too much, and kept upon the stage too long. To begin, then, with the body; in its outward appearance, it is much as when you saw it; also in its strength and activity (or, rather, weakness and inactivity) much the same. It is but a weak and tottering cottage, in which the immortal inhabitant tabernacles for a few days. She hopes for, and talks of a better house. And were it not for the weakness of her faith, and a sense of her own unworthiness and sinfulness; were it not that she has not yet obtained leave of her Lord to enter into the heavenly mansions, the spirit would ere this have made her escape through some of the chinks and openings of this earthly cottage, 'to the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' As it is, much of my time and attention are taken up in propping up the shattered building; not unlike (as I have often thought) the manner in which I have frequently seen the Vermont peasant support with shores and props his log cottage, that otherwise would fall and crush its inhabitants. But when he has done all, he has at best but a dangerous, inconvenient, and unlovely dwelling. So with me: yet I murmur not; for my blessed Lord has given the promise that he 'will change this *vile body*, and fashion it like unto his most *glorious body*.'

" 'In hope of that immortal crown,
I now the cross sustain,
And gladly wander up and down,
And smile at toil and pain.'

See the whole hymn in our collection, page 481. Tell your daughters I know a sweet tune to the hymn, and hope I

shall one day have the pleasure of singing it to them. I often sing it till my soul is fired with the sentiment it contains. Every line is full of meaning, and full of an anticipated Heaven. But I perceive, in giving you an account of the body, I have imperceptibly slid into some account of the soul; and no wonder, for the soul is the most valuable; and but for this, the body would be worth nothing. And were it not that the soul needs some kind of a dwelling during its temporary stay here; and were it not that this body, refined and immortalized, is to be the companion of the soul hereafter, I would never more talk or think about it; but as it is, I think considerably of the body. Is the body here the medium and occasion of pain? Ah! says faith, it shall be the medium and occasion of happiness hereafter; and for your light pains on earth you shall have great degrees of happiness in heaven; and I believe happiness will be much more perfect, in consequence of the reunion of soul and body, than it otherwise would be. Is the body *here* a medium of temptations? Hereafter all its spiritualized senses shall be so many additional inlets of joy. Does the body *here* weigh down and clog the soul? There it shall be a light, buoyant vehicle, which, without touching the pavement of heaven, shall bear the soul swift as angels fly, and without weariness, through all the endless variety of the paradise of God. I need your indulgence. I begin to speak of the body, and I talk of the soul; I begin to speak of the soul, and I talk of the body; and I probably have spoken of both much longer than I ought. Jesus Christ is a better theme. Let me say, then, all that I have of bodily health and comforts I derive from Jesus the Creator and preserver; all I have of spiritual health and comforts I derive from Jesus the Redeemer; all my hopes for body or soul hereafter I derive from him. He is the sinner's friend, therefore he is my friend. 'He of God is made unto the believer wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' 'Lord, I believe: help thou my unbelief!'"

The period of Mr. Fisk's indisposition was one of great prosperity in the cause of religion throughout his vicinity.

The ministers of our own Church, though not generally men of finished education, were men of sound minds, good natural parts, of great decision and force of character, and deeply imbued with the spirit of their station. Their industry was indefatigable. They constantly preached for the conversion of sinners and sanctification of believers ; always expected fruit, and were unhappy without it. According to the language of our Discipline, they considered "fruit" as a test of their call to the ministry. Hence their constant prayer was, "Give me children, or else I die." In this spirit each one went through the country like a flaming torch, carrying light and heat into every neighbourhood ; and their success bore a good proportion to their labour. To this the state of the country was not entirely unfavourable. The people had been accustomed to a dry, cold, lifeless ministry, and a "form of godliness" without the power, which held no place in the affections, and exercised but little control over their consciences. Their prejudices, it is true, were very strong ; but, as they heard for themselves, these gradually yielded before the power of reason. The truth took hold of their hearts, and spread from one to another, and from village to village, and town to town, until the region all around was in a blaze. Other denominations also caught the like spirit, so that the improvement in the religious condition was truly astonishing.

These were gratifying and trying seasons to Mr. Fisk : gratifying to his contemplations, but trying because not allowed to participate in the work. He was like a caged lion in a forest abounding with game, or a disabled war-horse neighing at the sound of the battle. Hear his own language : "Sometimes I am almost ready to rise up like Samson, who, when shorn of his strength, went out to shake himself as at other times, for he wist not that his strength had departed from him ; but I soon learn my weakness, and sit down measurably reconciled that God should send by whom he will." And how deeply his affections were embarked in this work may be farther seen by the following extract from a letter to the Rev. Daniel Filmore : "My health is, on the whole, better since the opening of the spring. Perhaps the

coming year I may be able to do something ; but I can assure you I form but a very weak spoke in our *itinerating machine*. The machine itself, however, *must* move on, and *will* move on. I am as great an advocate for this as ever ; indeed, the more I see of it, the more I am convinced of its utility. This machine, if we, as a Church, live religion, will roll throughout our country till it breaks down all opposition. May the Lord go before it, a pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. If I cannot move with it, I can pray for it."

He was not entirely inactive, however ; for, as appears by the subjoined letter to Mrs. Goodwin, he had again ventured into the pulpit :

"May 25th, 1822.

"I sit down late on Saturday afternoon to answer the last from you, which I do at this time more particularly, because, after preaching to our good folks in L. to-morrow, I purpose to set out the next day to visit some new towns in our northern border and in Lower Canada, which will occupy all my spare time before Conference. I must therefore write now, or not at all. My object in the above-mentioned journey is to examine some northern towns, where we think of forming a new circuit, and also to visit two or three new settlements that have been blessed with revivals of late, which are destitute of preaching ; especially one, which contains about twenty families, a great part of whom have become Christianized (though very loose before), and that, too, without any, or but little public preaching. I also expect to take in my tour my beloved Craftsbury Circuit, and visit once more before Conference the children the Lord has given me there. Craftsbury Society and Circuit 'is my first-born, and the beginning of my strength ; the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power.' My second, Charlestown, cost me more tears and more pains, and is yet the subject of greater anxiety ; but they are both as dear to me as labours, tears, and anxieties on my part, and kindnesses, and dangers, and reciprocal affection on theirs, can make them. But I the more joyfully visit Craftsbury Circuit now, because I learn that one town, where I was accustom-

ed to preach, and where all my public and private labours appeared to be fruitless, is beginning *to yield*. A cloud of mercy is hanging over, and a few gracious drops have descended. I fly to witness the wonder that even Irasburg has received the Gospel. Lord, let it spread through the town. Indeed, there is a sound of abundance of rain all around these regions. I have just returned from Concord, in this state, where the Lord is carrying on a gracious work. Between twenty and thirty have already found pardon, and many are saying, 'What shall I do to be saved?' I feel my whole soul in this work, but my body is in no work worth mentioning. It is as good a body as I deserve, but I assure you it is a miserable one : it has grown no better since I last wrote. Indeed, my health has been poorer for three weeks past than it was for some weeks before ; but I feel that I am the Lord's, soul and body. I forget if I mentioned in my last that we are to hold a camp-meeting in Barre, to commence on the 18th of June ; after which, the Lord willing, Brother Hoyt and myself will return home and spend the Sabbath, and then start for Conference. Our Conference to us (you must know) is more than the feast of tabernacles or of first-fruits was to the Jews. Here we meet from all parts of the work to tell over our joys and our sorrows, our adversities and successes during the past year. Brother meets brother with 'How have you been? What have you witnessed? How is your part of Zion prospering?' Here one finds a brother from his old circuit or station, and learns, in answer to his anxious inquiries, that one is persevering in grace, another has backslidden, and another has gone to Heaven. We talk about the campaign of the coming year, rejoice together seven or eight happy days, then each man takes horse, flies to his post to labour, to suffer, to rejoice, perhaps *to die*. But what then? 'He dies in the field of battle,' and goes home to wear a crown of glory. Blessed be God for the prospect of *dying in the field of battle*. You recollect, in our minutes of Conference, we have, among others, this question: 'Who have died this year?' Then follows the names of our deceased brethren. In this catalogue, if you are careful to read it over year after year, you will

ere long read the name of your much obliged friend, Willbur Fisk. To the short account that may there be given, you may add with your pencil this: 'His early departure excited in his breast but one regret, which was, that he had to leave the war before the cause of truth obtained a general triumph;' yet he could say, 'Even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.' Amen, and amen."

CHAPTER VI.

Education.—Preaches at Brattleborough.—Dedication Sermon at Danville.—Letters.—Marriage.

We have now reached the period at which Mr. Fisk's efforts were to be enlisted in the cause of education. He was well qualified to appreciate its importance ; but, like most of our ministers, he had been too fully engrossed with other still more important objects to make any personal exertions in its behalf. Nor, indeed, prior to this era, were any denominational arrangements with a view to it demanded. But, as it had pleased Heaven to increase the numbers, wealth, and other resources of the Church, it became necessary to provide for the education of her children. Providence clearly opened the way for this object by turning the heart of the Church towards it, and by furnishing men and means to carry on the enterprise.

At the New-England Conference for 1822, Mr. Fisk was ordained elder and returned superannuated. He was requested, at the same time, by the Conference, to employ himself, as far as his strength would allow, in raising funds to aid the Academy at Newmarket (N. H.), the only institution of the kind in New-England under the care of the Methodist Church. It had been founded only a few years, and was dragging along a feeble and sickly existence ; but its character and regulations—I know not why—did not meet Mr. Fisk's approbation. He therefore determined to decline the employment, unless the objectionable features could be removed. To ascertain whether such modification could be effected, he made a visit of observation to the academy ; prior to which, however, he spent a few days among his friends at Providence.

There is ground for supposing that Mr. Fisk's thoughts were not now first turned to the subject of education. He seems to have contemplated some course of conduct in ref-

erence to it ; but if so, it was very important to his success, whether so intended or not, that he had established such a character for piety and truly Christian zeal as had placed his motives and ulterior views beyond suspicion. He had gained, in a high degree, both the affections of the Church and the confidence of the public. Some light is thrown on these points by a remark which he made in a conversation between himself, Miss Peck, and Mr. Taft. On giving to Miss Peck the reasons why he could not encourage the Newmarket institution, he added, " But if the Lord spare my life, and will give me influence, with his blessing the Methodist Church shall not want academies nor colleges." After he had left the room, Mr. Taft remarked, " Mr. Fisk, if he live, will be a president or a bishop ; and with his humility, how bright will be his example !" The sequel honours his penetration.

During his visit at Providence, in conversation with some friends, Mr. Fisk advanced the following views, which, because they are alluded to in the subjoined letter, we think it proper to introduce. The subject of discussion was politeness. Mr. Fisk asserted that Lord Chesterfield's code is little more than a system of dissimulation or *polished hypocrisy* ; that religion is the only firm basis of true politeness ; and that, if we followed more closely the Saviour's precepts, it would gradually polish a rough exterior : he remarked that no other politeness would bear the scrutiny of Heaven. He added, " I may be peculiar in my views, but I always think of it as I do of *neatness*, that the want of it is incompatible with the spirit of the Gospel."

From Providence Mr. Fisk made a tour through Massachusetts and New-Hampshire, visiting, as above mentioned, the academy at Newmarket. His mind was still dissatisfied with the state of the institution, and he therefore determined to do nothing for its support. He proceeded homeward by slow journeys and a circuitous route, and on reaching Walpole addressed to his friend at Providence the ensuing letter :

" August 30th, 1832.

" I have only had an opportunity to write you a hasty note from Marshfield since I left Providence ; and although

this is a late hour (half past 10 o'clock), yet it is a good one, and I eagerly employ it to write to you. It is at such a time as this that my mind is completely itself. All is silent around me save the music of the cricket in the wall, whose plaintive note serves only to sooth the mind, and harmonize the softer feelings of the soul. At a time so well suited to reflection, you can judge of my feelings. Reflection carries me back to past days—scenes that will never return. The thought 'is, like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.' Anticipation looks forward to the future; and *here* I should be pained did I not believe that you, as well as myself, can put your trust in God.

"My health has endured my journey thus far as well as I could expect—perhaps, on the whole, better; and I sometimes indulge the thought that God may yet make me in some degree efficient in the Church. But again I chide myself for indulging it. I would live every moment by faith. When I review God's past providences to me, I am constrained to say, *Truly I*, of all others, ought to place the most implicit trust in *his future dispensations*. The doctrine of Providence is to me a precious doctrine. *Here* I can rest and be at ease, for God will do all things well.

"Soon after I parted with you, I left Providence, made a short stop at Marshfield, Newmarket, and Charlestown, and then set my face for Vermont. Notwithstanding, I frequently cast a longing, lingering look behind; yet the driver and his horses were both unconscious of it, and hurried me on with such rapidity, that, had our route been direct, I might have indulged the thought of seeing the distant hills of Vermont that night. But this pleasing vision I was obliged to forego. However, before I arrived at Walpole (where I am now writing) I had a view of Vermont. We were ascending a pile of hills, that Nature, in some of her romantic sports, had thrown together without any order, when we arrived at a lofty eminence, where we had a prospect as extensive as the eye could compass. My attention, you will readily conclude, was turned towards Vermont. Below was a rich valley, through which ran the beautiful Connecticut; still farther were seen, scattered upon a hundred hills, the

numerous settlements of the Vermont cottagers ; beyond the whole, the Green Mountains, now stopping the course of the clouds with their lofty summits, now subsiding into more passable heights, like a pillow of clouds stretched themselves from north to south as far as the eye could ken. When to this grand scenery was added the reflection that this was 'my own, my native' state, the place where I prattled in infancy, and sported in childhood, and in riper years learned to love all that was lovely and sublime in nature, it raised emotions that I cannot express. Such a prospect, perhaps, would appear very different to you, educated, as you have been, in the city. To you it might seem only a view of gloomy vales and cheerless hills, where owls might screech or wolves howl ; but to me it appeared like the 'land of delight,' where the whippoorwill sung in the evening and the robin in the morning, where simple sincerity took the place of unmeaning compliments and polished hypocrisy ; and yet I am inclined to think you would love Vermont. Your own native simplicity of character would lead you to love the people, and the beauties of nature would inspire you with love for its natural scenery : for we have not only much of the beautiful, but the grand, the sublime, that can kindle up the loftiest emotions of the soul. When, my dear R., I add to these wild and lofty formations of nature the careering of the elements in all their terrific grandeur, my own soul is overwhelmed, not only with the awful sublimity and grandeur of 'Him who made them all,' but with a *sense* of my own *nothingness*, a *worm of the dust*, a mere speck in creation ! O the boundless goodness of God ! who, though he makes darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him dark waters and thick clouds of the skies, yet he deigns to *notice even me ! poor feeble me !* O the unparalleled condescension of the love of God in Christ Jesus ! O my soul, be lost in wonder, *love*, and *praise !*''

In the course of this jaunt Mr. Fisk visited his relatives at Brattleborough, where he was invited to preach in the Congregational Church. The circumstances are, at this day, somewhat amusing. The people of this town, like many

others in New-England at that period, did not very well understand the Wesleyan system ; but they, nevertheless, agreed that it was dreadfully heretical. The congregation did not generally know that he was a Methodist, nor ever suspected from his preaching that he was heterodox. He preached with all his usual effect. His audience thought it not inconsistent with the soundest orthodoxy greatly to admire the sermon. One old lady, who thought the Methodist doctrine very terrible, was particularly warm and profuse in her encomiums ; but her more knowing son remarked, " Well, mother, you have heard a Methodist preacher at last, and you have lived through it." The good lady felt thunderstruck ; nevertheless, she had gone too far to retract. " Well, well, well," said a gentleman, on being similarly caught, " if that be Methodism, I wish we had more of it." Mr. Fisk preached but a few times in Brattleborough, yet he has several living seals to his ministry there.

He reached his father's some time in September, much recruited in health and strength. Soon after he wrote to a friend, saying that his " summer's leisure and holyday had been of great service" to him ; adding, " but I find I must have done with this *idling*, and go to work." Accordingly, a vacancy having occurred on Lyndon Circuit, through the illness of a minister, he consented to fill his appointment. He was now employed in the manner most congenial to his disposition. " I am now," he writes, " in the character that I so much admire—a *regular itinerant preacher*." There are many who will not sympathize with him in this admiration ; but we must remember that our estimate of an object depends as much on our own character as on the object itself. To one class we read " the preaching of the cross was foolishness," while to another it was " the power of God."

In the autumn of this year (1822) the Methodist Society at the adjacent town of Danville invited Mr. Fisk to preach the dedication sermon for a church they had just erected. It was with no little diffidence he gave his consent. In a letter to the Rev. Daniel Filmore, dated October 27, is found the following passage in reference to it :

"This week, on Wednesday, is appointed for the dedication of the new Methodist Chapel at Danville. For the want of a better man, who had time or inclination to undertake it, they have appointed *poor me* to preach the dedication sermon. My subject is, 'God is a Spirit : and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.'—John, iv., 24.

"The doctrine of the text is contained in two propositions :

"First. The worship of God must be spiritual.

"Second. The worship of God must be in truth.

"And the doctrine contained in these two propositions is confirmed and enforced by a

"Third, 'God is a Spirit.'

"I *guess* it will be rather a slim sermon. But I can judge better after it is preached ; and *my hearers will judge better still.*"

His congregation did judge better : for their judgment induced him to send it to the press, whence it was issued in pamphlet form, and afterward (1824) was inserted in the Methodist Magazine.

When the reader considers how recently the author had commenced his ministry, he will admit that he could have been no negligent student of theology. The design of the sermon was to give a view of the doctrines and kind of preaching that might be expected from that pulpit. It is well adjusted to the purpose. It is clear in its statements, evangelical in its character, practical in its tendency, and fervent in its piety. It had not the urgency and fervour of his ordinary style of preaching,* but the occasion hardly called for it. Nor had it the maturity and finish of his later productions. Nevertheless, it is a discourse, especially considering the early period of his life and ministry, of far more than ordinary ability.

While Mr. Fisk was stationed at Charlestown, he and

* Since writing the above, I have learned that at this time Mr. Fisk was obliged to preach with the greatest caution. He durst not allow his feelings to become deeply enlisted in his subject, for fear of renewing his hemorrhage. He frequently said that it required much grace and self-command to restrain his emotions within the limit of prudence.

others felt the want of some medium by which the friends of Zion could communicate their views, and diffuse religious intelligence among the churches. Accordingly, an association was formed, called an Intelligence Society, under whose auspices a small pamphlet was issued weekly. But this not fully answering the purpose, it was determined to establish a weekly religious newspaper of a superior character. The subject was accordingly brought before the New-England Conference. This was the origin of Zion's Herald, the first publication of the kind in our denomination, if not the first in the country and the world. It was ably conducted, and soon obtained a large circulation, so that when, in the year 1826, it was transferred to the Book-room, it numbered more than five thousand subscribers.

To the Agent of the Intelligence Society, Boston.

"Lyndon, November 8th, 1822.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"I suppose I ought to have written you, as the agent for the Intelligence Society, before this ; but my labours for the season thus far (until within a few weeks) have been so general and scattered, that I have hardly had anything to communicate ; neither have I now anything of very special importance. We can say, however, to the praise of God's grace, that our Zion generally, in this section of the work, is rising. Clouds of mercy, for more than twelve months past, seem to have been gathering over us, and still they promise much. Though we do not realize as yet any very powerful showers of reviving grace, yet gentle rains, like 'showers that water the earth,' refresh different parts of our vineyard. Lyndon Circuit, where I now labour, is, on the whole, rising. Lyndon itself is not so full of the heavenly flame as it has sometimes been, though the members are generally steadfast. In Sutton, where but twelve or fifteen months since we had but eight or ten members, we have now between thirty and forty, and the work is still promising. This work ought to be particularly noticed. It is in a town where, for a number of years, there has been little else but 'envying, strife, and every evil work.' Citizen has been armed against citizen,

and neighbour against neighbour, even to personal violence and wanton destruction of each other's property. And, what rendered it more painful to the friends of religion and peace, this division and enmity had its first rise in strife between two churches of different denominations; but our preachers went in, and began to preach without meddling with any of their contentions. God has owned the word, and the prospect is that the old leaven of malice will be purged out by the leaven of grace. Truly the words of the prophet are verified: 'The work of righteousness shall be *peace*, and the effects of righteousness quietness.'

"In Burke we have lately received some members, and the prospect is good. At Concord we have raised up a small society, within nine months past, of something like thirty members, against much opposition and strong prejudices.

'It has been one of those places, of which we have too many in New-England, where Methodism has been hardly known except as a term of reproach. When shall we have light enough to enlighten all the dark corners of our land?

"I have lately visited Craftsbury and Danville Circuits, and find them, on the whole, rising. Our camp-meeting at Cabot was made a great blessing to Danville Circuit. The members, which were before generally low, are greatly quickened. There are conversions and growing prospects in Cabot, Hardwick, Danville, Woodbury, and Walden. In the three latter towns especially there are good revivals. A very neat, convenient chapel, the first (best?) on the circuit, was dedicated in Danville on the 30th of last month [October], and another is under way in Cabot; so that that circuit, which has been declining for a few years past, especially since Lyndon was taken off from it, bids fair to take a good stand very speedily.

"On Craftsbury Circuit, there are conversions in Albany and Barton, and quite an awakening in Holland. There old Brother Robinson, whose house used to be a home for our preachers in the State of Connecticut thirty years ago, is reaping the fruits of his prayers. He was at the Quarterly Meeting for Craftsbury Circuit in Albany; his head was white with age, but his soul was in full strength; and he was

rejoicing in the perfect love of God, and praising the Lord from a full soul that many of his neighbours and some of his children were turning to the Lord. 'I had almost given over,' said the good old man, 'but the Lord has heard my prayer at last.'

"Finally, we have much to encourage us in these regions, and have reason to think that God is with us. While you have a strong company to unite with you in Boston, do not forget the few sheep scattered upon the mountains of Vermont."

Can any one read the following account of his humble, devout, heavenly state of mind without having his own heart affected and his devotional feelings elevated? It is an extract from a letter to his aunt at Brattleborough:

"December 10, 1822.

* * * "But I want, most of all, to feel more of the blessed effects of the atoning sacrifice in my own soul. I have not the power to explain, as clearly as I could wish, this glorious doctrine to others, so as to enlighten the ignorant and silence cavillers; but in the experimental use of this doctrine, as it respects my own case, I have not, for two or three years, found any perplexing difficulties in my creed—I had like to have said, no obscurity in my views—and I know not but I might have said it with safety. I see clearly the necessity, and propriety, and *glory* of taking Jesus Christ as my *wisdom*, my *righteousness*, my *sanctification*, my *redemption*. And I see, I think, very clearly how this is done—by *simple faith*. My mind seldom hits upon this subject but it causes to vibrate one of the tenderest chords of my soul; it 'dissolves my heart in tenderness, and melts my eyes to tears.' Is this the excitement of merely natural sympathies? Is it enthusiasm? Blessed enthusiasm! Would to God I could live under its influence forever! It tends, more than anything else, to sink me into my own nothingness; causes me to throw myself in the dust at the foot of the cross, my only proper place; leads me to exalted and heart-cheering views of God, my Redeemer, and induces

me to cry out with the apostle, '*This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am CHIEF.*' But my difficulty is the weakness and inconstancy of that apprehending, that appropriating act of faith, which 'receives the atonement' and holds it fast; which takes into the heart the heavenly guest, and entertains him there. Faith, when it is as it should be, enables the soul not only *occasionally to breathe*, but *constantly to live*. 'I am crucified with Christ,' saith the apostle, 'nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' How few know by experience the deep import of these words? and yet all should know it—all may know it. Into this state my soul at times presses to enter: till I attain to this, I cannot, *must not* rest. If you believe this state attainable, my dear aunt, and I think you do, unite your prayers with mine, that I may gain, in the full sense of the apostle, *this death, this life, this spiritual crucifixion and resurrection*; and then, whenever I come to the people, I shall come *in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of peace.*"

To a young relative, who was in danger of imbibing lax and dangerous views of Christianity, Mr. Fisk addressed this faithful letter of warning and remonstrance.

"Lyndon, January 15, 1823.

"As your father is going down, I can hardly persuade myself to let so favourable an opportunity pass without writing, though I have nothing of consequence to communicate; and I suppose you are in no hurry for another *long lecture*, such as I gave you in my last; probably you have not yet digested that. There is reason, however, for another, if the fears of our common friend H. are well founded. She rather suspects you of skepticism. She thinks, however, that you are not aware of it, but that it is creeping upon you, and entwining itself with your feelings secretly and imperceptibly, while you imagine that you are still holding fast the princi-

ples in which you were educated. Now this, considering where you live, is very possible. The very atmosphere of Boston is contagious; and a man mingling in society there is in danger, unless fortified by experimental godliness, of inhaling the most deleterious air that was ever breathed by the soul of man. A man is in more danger in Boston, because the cup of infidelity is beautifully gilt, and its contents so artfully mixed that he who quaffs it imagines himself drinking the most salutary beverage. Their religion is *liberal*, their views are *charitable*. They have no opposition to religion; no, they are great advocates for it; but it is enthusiasm they oppose—it is superstition—it is bigotry. Thus, under the odious names of enthusiasm, superstition, bigotry, they are removing all the ancient landmarks, and sapping the very foundation of Christianity; while infidelity, under the imposing names of Liberality and Charity, is coming in like a flood. This I conceive to be a true statement of the general state of things in Boston. If you have shared so much in the Boston tone of feeling, and have learned so much of the Boston cant as to say to yourself, on reading this, ‘Cousin is *uncharitable*; he is *illiberal* towards the Bostonians,’ why, then, I say, so much the greater your danger. This is the very reason why their society and influence are dangerous, because they appear what they are not, and because they make people think, and even think themselves, that they are pretty good Christians, when, in fact, they are pretty near, if not quite, infidels. Now, cousin, I beg of you, be on your guard. Do not think my caution unnecessary. Let not the popularity of a Channing, an Everett, a Ware, and others, lead you frequently to hear them. I would not, to be sure, be so bigoted as not to hear them at all; but my visits to their churches should be, ‘like angels’ visits, few and far between.’ If you want to be instructed, you have it in your power to hear, every Sabbath, one of the soundest divines of his age—I mean Mr. Hedding;* if you would get warmed, hear Mr. Wiley; and if you would have your sympathies moved at the same time your heart is instructed, cross

* Rev. Elijah Hedding, elected and ordained bishop at the General Conference of 1824.

the bridge and hear Mr. Filmore ; then you will have an opportunity of taking tea with Miss M. G., who will talk more sound sense to you in one half hour than some of your Boston belles in a week. I doubt not but you may find, among the other denominations—the Baptists, Episcopalians, and Hopkinsian Congregationalists—much that will be edifying. Their cup, to be sure, may have a little of the Calvinistic bitter ; but this you will know how to drain off, and the rest will be good and wholesome. Finally, you and I, if it please you, will still hold to the good old way. After the manner which the Bostonians call heresy, we will worship the God of our fathers. That religion which our great grandfather believed and preached ; which enabled our grandfather to triumph in the hour of death ; and, in short, which supported your afflicted and pious mother for many years, and which caused her to exult in the painful agonies of a long-protracted death—*that religion shall be ours* ; not merely because it was theirs, but because it is the religion of the Bible, and because it supported them, and has supported thousands, in the hour when they most needed support. At that time, when the heart-strings break ; when nature's crimson current curdles back to the heart ; when all the vain popularity of the world bursts like an airy bubble ; and when eternity, with all its awful realities, rushes on to meet the soul, then Jesus, formed in the soul the hope of glory, affords to the dying saint his last, his *only* support."

The ensuing letter to a young lady is an additional proof of the solicitude with which he watched over those who had been the subjects of his ministry. She was on a visit to Charleston, S. C., for the benefit of her health.

"Lyndon, Vt., Feb. 9th, 1823.

"After the fatiguing labours of the Sabbath, which you know is my day of labour, I have seated myself in my room, for retirement, rest, and reflection. Here, as is not unusual with me, especially on Sabbath evenings, past scenes and old friends pass in review before my mind. 'The memory of joys that are past,' says Ossian, 'is pleasant and mournful

to the soul.' It is with mingled emotions of pleasing melancholy that I call up those scenes that have gone by, in which I have enjoyed your society and that of other dear friends in Charlestown. But, so far as these times have been spent to the glory of God, I do not regret their flight. They have only been hastening us on, through the subordinate and mingled felicities of life, to the supreme and unalloyed felicities of Heaven. There all friends that are united by the ties of Christian affection shall one day meet and mingle in their celestial joys, and chant together their endless songs. The principal inquiry with us, then, should be, Are we travelling thither? and, next to the inquiry into my own state in this respect, the situation of those who have been the subjects of my unworthy labours and prayers excites the highest interest in my mind. I look them over one by one, and raise the inquiry in my own mind, Is this one persevering? and then strive to answer the question according to my latest intelligence, or my knowledge of their dispositions and circumstances. You cannot wonder, then, if, when your name comes up, I have some anxious feeling: not that I doubt your attachment to the cause of your Redeemer, but I know not your situation. Perhaps you have as many means of grace as when in Massachusetts; but it is possible you have not: perhaps you are surrounded with pious friends, who are striving to help you along in the way of the cross; but it may be you are among the lovers of this world, to whom your religion will appear like superstition, and whose pleasure it would be to have you join them in their worldly delights. If this should be your situation—at a distance from your pious mother and sisters, and the Christian friends with whom you have associated—you cannot wonder, I say, if I have some anxieties on your account. It may be, the worldly atmosphere with which you are surrounded will damp, at least, your spiritual fervour; it may be, you will drink in some of the heart-defiling, soul-destroying spirit. To prevent this, as well as to assure you how tenderly and affectionately you are remembered, I send you, from the mountains of Vermont, this winged messenger of peace and salvation; and I say to it, Go and tell A., from him whom she is pleased to call

her spiritual father, who had the pleasure of witnessing the first dawns of heavenly light in her heart, and who has often strived by the breath of prayer with her and others to raise the smoking flax to a sacred flame—tell her, I say, that she must guard with a vestal vigilance and a vestal purity the holy fire that has been kindled in her heart ; tell her she must always keep in mind that Jesus whom she has professed to love, that cause which she has professed to honour ; that if ever the empty, the gilded and fascinating objects of this world begin to assume an engaging and inviting appearance, she must turn her eye to the cross of Christ, and gaze upon its divine sublimities and glories till the transforming vision stamp an emptiness, a deserved emptiness, upon all the bawbles of time ; tell her I fear, most of all, that disposition of hers, that is so unwilling to deny anything that is pleasing to her friends : a disposition which, when properly sanctified and regulated, renders its possessor a most amiable and engaging friend ; but which, like most other endowments, may become a source of temptation. It may lead to that yielding relaxation, to those condescending compliances, which are incompatible with the unbending principles of a self-crucifying Gospel ; that Gospel which has said, ‘ If any man come unto me, and hate not (that is, comparatively) his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and even his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.’—Luke, xiv., 26. Let this teach my dear A. the necessity, at least, of being on her guard ; of saying, in the spirit of a resolute Christian, Thus far can I go, but *no farther*.”

* * * * *

“April 26th.

“To Miss PECK.

“I would not, by a second delay, subject you again to anxiety. I cannot but think, with you, that it is wrong to suffer the feelings to be so anxiously exercised, though I know it is natural ; still, reason would say it is wrong, since it neither benefits your friends nor yourself ; religion would say it is wrong, since it implies a distrust in God’s

providences, or dissatisfaction with his dispensations. If you find it difficult to overcome your feelings, let it lead you to the inquiry, Am I not too strongly attached to the creature? am I not depending too much upon earthly enjoyments? Indeed, my dear, I have sometimes feared that you were; that you were calculating too much upon me; that you may be disappointed. You will find much, *very much in me*, to try all your Christian graces, but much more in my situation; for it will be no small lesson, educated as you have been, to learn 'to become all things to all men:' and this seems to be necessary for the *wife* of an *itinerant minister*. But I trust my dear R. can learn it. I do not wish my friends to be stoical. If they had not warm feelings, and were not susceptible of strong attachments, I should be *less interested* in them. I think I see these traits of character in the *man Christ Jesus*; and they are very strongly marked in the character of the apostles St. Paul and St. John. And these tender sympathies and social feelings, when sanctified by grace and dignified by a judicious deportment, render their possessor truly lovely. They are the delightful cords that bind kindred spirits together—the uniting cement of friendly souls. Nor is it surprising that one who, like you, has had most of their earthly ties severed, should feel their attachment to the few friends that remain strengthened. But this very circumstance shows you the uncertainty of earthly enjoyments, and the danger of trusting to them too much. Besides, you well know, my dear, that these sympathies, however commendable when they are kept in their proper place, are sure, when they take the lead of the soul, to conduct us, through pain and anxieties, to disappointment. When we are just ready to quaff the cup of earthly enjoyment, it falls from our hand, or in tasting it we find mingled therein some unexpected bitterness; and frequently our Heavenly Father, when he sees that we are depending too much upon any earthly good, in mercy to us either deprives us of it, or imbitters the enjoyment. May Heaven forbid that we should bring upon ourselves any painful discipline of this kind by our undue attachment to sublunary good. It is my ardent prayer that Christ would unite us to himself as the branch

is united to the vine ; that, while we 'love *each other* with pure hearts fervently,' we may love him supremely ; and have, above all things, an experimental knowledge of that mystical union that exists between Christ and his Church : so that hereafter, when Christ shall come to take home his weary bride, you may go into the marriage supper of the Lamb, and there be met by

"Your unworthy but truly affectionate

"W. FISK."

Mr. Fisk's health had now so far improved that he could perform all the necessary labours of his ministry, preaching often five times a week without inconvenience. He had learned some prudence "by the things which he suffered," and never afterward exerted and exposed himself as he had done before. Having now a prospect of life and improved health, he thought seriously of bringing his matrimonial engagement to a consummation. To prepare the mind of Miss Peck for the anticipated change in her situation, he wrote to her, February 21st, a letter, from which what follows is an extract :

"You can form no idea, my dear R., of the pleasure we take in this cold country in sleigh-riding, which we generally enjoy from the middle of October to March, and sometimes to the last of March. It is indeed cold ; but *this*, strange as it may seem, constitutes half of the amusement. Roll yourself up in fur, and then, with a fiery Green Mountain courser, you may glide over the snowhills without remembering it is winter ; or, if a northwest breeze sometimes puts you in mind of it, this only increases the enjoyment by making you reflect how much cold is left behind by the swiftness of your courser, and how much is kept out by your buffalo, and by making you feel in anticipation the warmth of the blazing fire that awaits you when you stop. Nothing is more certain than this *truth*, that pleasure is heightened by partial deprivation : but I will not stop to philosophize *here*. I was about to say, I wish you were here to take a sleigh-ride with us ; it would be a double pleasure to me ; but, again, the thought arises that it might not be so to you.

“ Our society, with a few exceptions, is not as refined as that with which you have been accustomed to mingle. We are a plain people ; there is more honest simplicity than refinement among us. But, if I have judged correctly of my dear friend, she would value refinement little, unaccompanied by moral worth. What we lack in polish we try to make up in integrity and moral principle. We have many warm hearts here, who not only love their friends with ardour, but, I trust, their God with pure hearts fervently ; many spirits with whom I trust it will be our delight to mingle through the ceaseless ages of eternity. Religion does indeed purify the heart from that selfishness which seeks only its own accommodation and its own interests ; and not unfrequently, under a very rough exterior you will find a soul *noble, disinterested, and lovely* in its moral qualities. And these qualities, my dear R., you and I will think most of ; however pleasing a polished exterior may be to *us*, we will remember that those who give evidence of being the children of God are lovely to our Heavenly Father, and that it is with them we hope to spend eternity. Besides, we must take the world as it is, and do what we can to make it better, always remembering that others will have much to bear from our infirmities. If the Lord will but give us souls for our hire, no matter whether they are among the rich or the poor, the refined or unrefined : the *love of Christ* will refine them, and in the day of eternity will polish them as diamonds of the first water. What a lovely character has St. Paul drawn for our imitation in thirteenth chapter of 1st Corinthians ! I love to contemplate it, and long to see all its fruits in my own soul, and in *those* who are *dear to me* ; and for *this* daily prays

“ Yours in affection.”

In the same spirit of devout piety that he had exhibited all along, he proceeded in his nuptial arrangements. On the 14th day of May he wrote his last lines to Miss Peck prior to their union. In this, as he disliked publicity and parade, he requested that the ceremony, contrary to the usage of the church to which she belonged, might take

R

place at her mother's house: he then adds, "Let us devoutly pray, my dear R., that God would crown our union with his approbation; making it a source of consolation and thanksgiving to *us*, and, above all, a blessing to his Church. Pray much for yourself, but *much*, very much for *me*, that we may maintain a singleness of eye to the glory of God; that we may be one in heart, one in life, and one in a glorious immortality." They were married on the morning of the 9th of June, 1823, after a courtship of seven years.

CHAPTER VII.

Dialogue.—Universalism.—Appointed Presiding Elder.—Official Conduct.—Letters.—Incident.—Traits of Character.—General Conference of 1824.

THE New-England Conference met this year at Providence. Mr. Fisk, having passed through his labours with satisfaction and gradually improving health, attended and resumed his effective relation.

In the course of business, the agency for the Newmarket Academy came up; and when it was announced that the agent had been altogether inactive, the following conversation took place between him and the presiding bishop :

"Why," said the bishop, "have you not solicited funds for the academy?"

"Because, sir, my conscience would not let me."

"Must the Conference, then," returned the bishop, "be governed by your conscience?"

"No, sir," was the reply, "I do not wish the Conference to be governed by my conscience, but *I* must be; neither do I wish to control the Conference in any way; but if, after examining the school for themselves, the Conference see fit to place it on a different footing, it shall have my utmost exertion."

The suggestion was adopted. A committee, consisting of Rev. Messrs. Hedding (now Bishop Hedding), Lindsey, and Fisk, was appointed, with authority to investigate the subject, and to adopt such measures as might be deemed expedient or necessary. The final consequence was an entirely new organization of the school, and its removal to Wilbraham. But of this we shall learn more hereafter.

The region of country embraced in the New-England Conference was much infested with the insidious doctrines of Universalism. However it be accounted for, and, of course, different parties will explain it differently, it is a fact, that the regions where the Genevan theology has most prevailed have been most prolific in the various modifications

of semi-infidelity. These perversions of Christianity gave great trouble to the zealous and untiring ministers in the New-England Conference, and greatly obstructed the spread of evangelical truth and holiness. For these reasons, the Conference, at its preceding session, requested Mr. Fisk to deliver before them a discourse on the doctrine of future punishment. Such a request from such a body, most of them so far his seniors in age and office, must be regarded as highly complimentary. On the 23d of June he preached before them his memorable sermon, from the text, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest to every man according to his work."—Psa. lxi., 12. This is truly an admirable discourse, indicating unequivocal proof of what he was to become, both as a writer and a preacher. The argument is clear, close, conclusive. It contains as much thought as could well be brought into one discourse; while some of the views, especially in reconciling the punishment of sin with the Divine mercy, were quite original. It was attacking Universalism with a new weapon, and on its own ground. The style is simple, concise, perspicuous; sufficiently logical in its modes of expression for a popular audience, but not so scholastic as to be obscure even to the uneducated. It combines practical utility with theoretic accuracy, closing with a pertinent and vigorous application.

The students of Brown University felt no small interest in one of their own *alumni*, who was now rising fast into public notice, and a large portion of them were present on the occasion. They participated in the general feeling of delight excited by the discourse, and, as a proof of it, held a meeting, at which they requested a copy for publication, offering to bear the expense; and when Mr. Fisk pleaded his inability to remain long enough to attend to it, they engaged to superintend its passage through the press. The Conference also passed a vote unanimously recommending its publication. The students, accordingly, had it printed as a pamphlet. It was inserted afterward in the Methodist Magazine, republished in the Wesleyan Magazine in London, and printed by the book-agents in a separate form, and has ever since been kept as one of their standard publications, commanding a ready and extensive sale.

In the course of the following year, Mr. Pickering, minister of the Universalist Society at Providence, published, in a paper of which he was editor, a series of articles on this discourse. To these the author of the sermon replied, through the columns of *Zion's Herald*, in ten numbers. These articles are written with an ability that sustained the opinion of his talents created by his sermon, and amply showed the futility of his opponent's reasoning; but, as we could not present a connected view of his arguments, and detached statements would answer but little purpose, we content ourselves by referring the reader to Dr. Fisk's works.

It is no small proof of the position to which Mr. Fisk had risen in the estimation of his brethren, that he was thus early appointed presiding elder of the Vermont District. Leaving Mrs. Fisk for the present with her mother, as soon as Conference was over he set off for the scene of his labours. It was an ample field, comprising all that part of the State of Vermont lying east of the Green Mountains, with one circuit in New-Hampshire. The duties of this important office—the connecting-link between the bishop and the stationed ministers, and the Conference and the people—were in those days peculiarly arduous. To travel over the entire ground once in three months, to hold Quarterly Conferences “to hear complaints and try appeals,” to preach, meet the societies, attend to the wants of the preachers and the enforcement of discipline, and to see that the ecclesiastical affairs, temporal and spiritual, are properly conducted, is a work of great labour and responsibility. And not the least delicate part of his duty is the conveyance of suitable information concerning the qualifications of ministers, and the claims of the various places, to the bishop and his council, for making out the annual appointments. These duties require a rare combination of excellences. Much wisdom and prudence, great knowledge of human nature, ardent attachment to the Methodist Discipline, a faithfulness that shrinks from no duty, however unpleasant, yet a temper not easily offended or quickly appeased, an impartiality that eschews alike favouritism and antipathy, are among the essential qualifications. But to combine these with that ardour of tempera-

ment, and energy of character, and spirit of enterprise, all baptized into a pure, unadulterated Christian zeal, and with efficient pulpit talents to ensure adequate respect and usefulness both among preachers and people, is the more difficult, because these attributes, involving some apparent contrariety, are not often found together ; but they were beautifully blended in the character of Mr. Fisk ; and hence he was received, notwithstanding his youth, by all his charge with the utmost cordiality.

He went to his field of labour in the true spirit of his commission. He found many things that required all his care and efforts. The reins of discipline had become in many places not a little relaxed ; the general rules were in some cases habitually violated ; and love-feasts, and even class-meetings, irregularly attended. These disorders grieved him. "I am more than ever convinced," he says, in a letter to the Rev. Daniel Filmore, "of the importance of keeping all these little affairs straight ; otherwise Methodism will and must inevitably run down." He accordingly commenced at once, resolutely but prudently, to correct whatever was contrary to the discipline, urging people and preachers to enter more fully into the grand business of their profession.

In those days, when the circuits were very extensive, Quarterly Meetings were very important and interesting seasons. They were always continued at least two days, viz., on Saturday and Sunday. The people came in flocks from all parts of the circuit ; and friends and brethren, who seldom saw each other but then, met, and sang, and prayed, and rejoiced together, as at the feast of tabernacles among the Jews. They were always looked forward to as signal privileges, and preachers and people were disappointed if they had not some sensible spiritual benefits. And who can tell how much these occasions helped to foster Christian sympathy, and promote a community of feeling and interest, and thus bind the Church together in bonds of closer union ?

Mr. Fisk faithfully discharged the duties of his office. Notwithstanding his feeble health, he was always punctual

to his appointments; and "his coming," says the Rev. C. D. Cahoon, "was always like the coming of Titus." His practice was to keep each Friday as a day of fasting and prayer, in especial reference to the Quarterly Meeting. On Saturday his sermons were designed for the edification of the Church, and were usually on the higher points of Christian practice and experience; for it was his sentiment that "a little band of holy, faithful Christians are stronger than a large church of lukewarm professors." In the evening he met the Quarterly Meeting Conference, while the private members held a prayer-meeting, to which, provided his health permitted, he always repaired if the Conference closed in time. The general practice was to hold the love-feast on Sabbath morning before preaching, at the close of which he was accustomed, when there was need of it, to lay the wants of the minister before the people, and urge them to exertion. Often has the young and inexperienced heart been encouraged to endure the trials and privations of the itinerant life by the affectionate interest thus exhibited. On the Sabbath, when the congregations were large and mixed, his sermons were of a more general character, but always constructed with a view to the legitimate objects of the Christian ministry; nor was he ever content to preach without spiritual effect. Hence he wielded "the sword of the Spirit" in earnest; and in every part of the district, many were the trophies of his Christian prowess.

His intercourse with the preachers of his district was like that of a father with his children, or rather an elder brother's with the family circle. He was affable yet dignified. He studied in every way to profit the younger ministers, by exciting them to piety, and by correcting their faults. Yet he always reproofed so judiciously and kindly as to secure esteem rather than give offence. Hence his company was invariably both agreeable and edifying. His conversation was cheerful, but spiritual; his example such as all might imitate. He took great interest in his preachers, delighting in their improvement, and rejoicing to tell it for their encouragement. Writing to a friend, he says, speaking of one of the ministers, "He is always at his business, and

works by day and by night. He preached yesterday one of the most interesting discourses that I have heard since Conference ; and I must say, I heard but very few at Conference that equalled it, in my estimation. His manner is something like Bishop George's. He has, to be sure, his own impediments and hesitancy ; but he fills and fills up, and runs over, and baptizes his whole congregation. O my brother, what a blessed thing it is to preach with the holy unction from above !”

It was not unusual for him, when more than ordinary interest was excited at the Quarterly Meeting, to remain a few days to foster the work, to which he never hesitated about sacrificing his own personal convenience or pleasure. On one of these occasions he wrote to Mrs. Fisk as follows :

“Lempster, N. H., 13th August, 1823.

“MY DEAR R.,

“I have been hoping, ever since I left Lyndon, to spend this week in Brattleborough and Guildford, from whence I designed to write you particularly, and for that reason have delayed writing until this time ; but I have been disappointed in my calculation. The cause, however, I do not regret. I came to this town last Saturday to attend to the Quarterly Meeting for Unity Circuit. I found a good work of reformation commenced here, and it was greatly forwarded and increased by the meeting. The excitement became so general, and the call for labour so great, that I concluded to give up my visit to my friends for the present, and spend a few days with the people here. I feel myself obliged to forego every earthly consideration for the good of the Church and the salvation of souls. O how glorious is the work of saving souls ! I feel my own soul fired anew in the work since I have been here. Old and young, parents and children, are inquiring what they shall do to be saved. I scarcely visit a house without leaving them all in tears. Last Sabbath, after sacrament, I invited those who were seeking their Saviour to come forward for prayers, and numbers came from different parts of the house, with sighs and tears, while a remarkable solemnity and much weeping

were seen throughout the whole congregation. I cannot tell how many are awakened throughout the town ; but I must say, I have rarely seen a better prospect for a general work than is now discoverable in this place. Pray, my dear, that no adverse winds may scatter the clouds of mercy that hang over the people. This afternoon I have an inquiring-meeting for the serious-minded, and to-morrow I am to preach for the last time in the place. I leave the people reluctantly ; but I must go to attend the Quarterly Meeting on Athens Circuit, after which I expect to spend a few days in Brattleborough and Guildford, and then return towards the north."

The following notice of this revival is furnished by a friend :

"Of Dr. Fisk's usefulness while presiding elder on Vermont District, probably you are well informed. At Lempster, N. H., where I am intimately acquainted, he was instrumental, in connexion with Rev. Abram D. Merrill, in promoting the greatest revival which that place has ever witnessed. The effect of the doctor's sermon on the Sabbath at Quarterly Meeting was overwhelming. When the invitation was given for seekers of religion to rise in the congregation, there was a simultaneous movement throughout the house ; and immediately subsequent to the Quarterly Meeting, scores of persons were brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

His anticipations as to his secular prospects in this new region, and the manner in which he endeavoured to prepare Mrs. Fisk for her change of situation, may be learned from a letter which he wrote her about this time. The clergyman's wife has some things to learn and to suffer as well as her husband, for she marries the Church and its interests when she marries its servant. "When the pious Herbert," says his quaint biographer, "changed his sword and silk clothes into a canonical coat, immediately after he had seen and saluted his wife"—a noble lady, nearly related to the Earl of Danby—"he said to her, 'You are now a minis-

ter's wife, and must now so far forget your father's house as not to claim a precedence of any of your parishioners ; for you are to know that a priest's wife can challenge no precedence of place but that which she purchases by her obliging humility ; and I am sure places so purchased do best become them : and let me tell you, I am so good a herald as to assure you that this is truth.' And she was so meek a wife as to assure him it was no vexing news to her, and that he should see her observe it with a cheerful willingness."—But to the letter. Those of us who enjoy the greater advantages and comforts of the present day, may take a lesson from it.

"Lyndon, Sept. 4th, 1823.

"On my return to Lyndon this week, after having been absent nearly six weeks, I found a letter from you, which was the first intelligence I have had from you since I left Providence. I am sorry to hear that your health is so feeble ; hope it is by this time improved. Give yourself no uneasiness about a preparation to come among strangers, as you term it ; you will be as well prepared to come as we shall be to receive you ; and both the preparation and the reception will be good enough, if we have a good share of grace and humility. The truth is, if you should bring nothing we should be quite comfortable, provided we can bring ourselves down to our circumstances. You must give up all ideas, my dear, of being very particular. This, I perceive, will be a hard lesson for you to learn ; but, through grace, you will learn it. We live not for ourselves, but for the Church ; and we must get along in that way that will make the Church the least expense, and ourselves the least trouble and the most time. What conveniences we cannot obtain this year, we will, if we should live, try to get next ; at any rate, we will not so far *inconvenience* ourselves for the sake of *conveniences* as to injure our health : this would be to frustrate our own object. And what if we should not procure, while we live, all the conveniences that appear desirable ? the time will soon come that shall be the last of our earthly enjoyments and deprivations, and then, if we are

found faithful, we shall be welcomed 'into the joy of our Lord—into the mansion prepared for us above—into the inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.' What are all the little privations, the temporary trials, the light afflictions of this life? they are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall follow; no, blessed be God, they are not worth naming. Give me Christ and his cross here, and then shall I have Christ and his glory hereafter. The world looks less to me of late than it has done in months past; it is like a bubble, and the goodness thereof like a fading flower. But Jesus and his love are permanent; they engage my soul, they fill my heart. My joy below is to feast upon a Saviour's love; my business is to recommend it to others; and you, my dear companion, must join me in this sacred work. O, may God fire your soul with the subject, and loose your tongue upon the theme."

In the month of October Mr. Fisk attended a meeting of the trustees of the Wesleyan Academy at Boston, and availed himself of this opportunity of taking Mrs. Fisk home to his father's at Lyndon, where he intended to reside while on the district.

There was no little romance in those days in the life of a Methodist itinerant minister. It was almost constantly diversified by incident, amusing, grotesque, edifying, and not unfrequently elevated. The variety of persons with whom he came in contact—lodging to-night in a palace, to-morrow night in a hut—afforded a fine field for the study of human nature: the extent of their travels furnished high gratification to the lover of natural scenery. He was independent as the Calmuc, and free as the mountain hunter. True, he encountered some hard fare, but not more so than Washington Irving describes in his *Tour to the Prairies*. And then, how delightful, by contrast, was the clean hearth and cheerful fire of the substantial farmhouse, where every one vied in assiduity to show him kindness, after having been pelted by the mountain storm, or half famished among the semi-civilized mountaineers to whom he had been carrying the Gospel of peace! These lights and shadows often diversified

the itinerancy of Mr. Fisk. Take the following specimens:

As Mr. and Mrs. Fisk (it was her first initiation) pursued their journey to Lyndon, while yet in the State of New-Hampshire, they were on a certain occasion overtaken by night before they reached their intended stopping-place. There was a prospect of a very dark night. Mr. Fisk therefore stopped at a comfortable-looking farmhouse, and asked if they would entertain strangers. "Yes," replied the old lady who opened the door, "if you have any religion."

"If we have not," said Mr. Fisk, "perhaps you can help us to some."

"O then," was the reply, "come in, come in, with all my heart."

They accordingly passed the night at the cottage, where they were very hospitably entertained. They found their hostess a rare specimen of primitive Christianity; one whose walk seemed to be in the very precincts of a better world. In the morning our traveller was invited to lead the devotions of the family, which he did with such fervour and eloquence that the good old lady was completely melted down; and when he closed, she in her turn began, and poured out her heart in such strains of humble love and devout praise as showed a soul in close communion with the skies. When her guests left the house she followed them to the door, crying after them, "God bless *thee*, thou blessed of the Lord; continue faithful, and God will hold thee in his right hand!" There are some who will not be surprised to hear that this was Mrs. Fletcher, of Unity, N. H., long known as an "Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile." She and her strange guest are now the inhabitants of the blessed abodes,

"Where all things that are lovely meet,
And all things that are pure."

The following is a scene from nature: Going to one of his appointments with Mrs. Fisk, their route lay across a lofty range dignified with the classical name of Mount Olympus. When they commenced the ascent the snow was falling thick and fast, and there was every prospect of a stormy and uncomfortable ride; but when they got midway

to the top, the snow ceased, and dense clouds settling below, obscured the view on all sides. Above, the sun was veiled by a thin cloud, as if to screen its dazzling brightness, and make their way more pleasant. Descending, they found, when about half way down the mountain, that it was still snowing as fast as ever, and that much snow had fallen while they were enjoying their ride above the clouds. Such scenes are not uncommon in mountainous regions.

Mr. Fisk's benevolence has been several times mentioned. This was not confined to mankind; it included also the brute creation. He could not give needless pain to any living thing. He was very careful of his horse, and the horse, in turn, seemed greatly attached to his master, which he would make known unequivocally by neighing and pawing the ground at the sound of his voice, or of his peculiar and well-known cough. Of his father's dog he was not less a favourite. An instance of canine sagacity is not unworthy of relation: Mr. Fisk was absent at a certain time, and was not expected home for some days. One evening, Diamond, the dog, came running and panting to Mrs. Fisk, put his feet upon her lap, wagged his tail, and showed by every speaking sign his anxiety to communicate something. Not seeming to be understood, he ran off, but soon returned again in the same manner, and again bounded away. Feeling now alarmed, Mrs. Fisk followed him to the door, and soon heard Mr. Fisk's cough. At the sound Diamond showed more glee than ever, leaping up, licking her hands, &c., and then away he ran to meet Mr. Fisk, who was still near half a mile distant. He followed him home, kept close to him, eagerly looking for his caresses until he was noticed.

In the course of this year he wrote a letter to Mrs. Goodwin, from which we present an extract :

"December 17.

"My spiritual health is gaining a little : on this subject I could say much, but I forbear. You are too well acquainted with my unworthiness and deficiencies in the service of God. I would be glad to see my children rising to a higher standing in the divine life than I have attained unto, and

hold all they gain much faster than I have done. It is a great attainment to get blessings of a spiritual nature, but still greater to retain them.

“ ‘ Happy the man who wisdom gains ;
Thrice happy who his guest retains.’ ”

If, through the whole of my Christian life, I had practised the maxim of the miser, ‘ Keep what you have, and get what you can,’ I should by this time have been very rich : but I have not ; I have too often lost great blessings, and overlooked and squandered away small ones. I mention this, my dear sister, that you and yours may profit by my errors. Let me entreat you to be saving of your small gains ; Christians generally lose more by not attending to this than they are aware of. Most earthly estates are accumulated by small gains ; and a man in any business generally thrives in proportion as he is saving of his littles. How many in this way, though they began with but small capitals, have in a few years become wealthy : so might the Christian ; and so some do. I have seen in a few cases a constant, though almost imperceptible, march towards holiness, until the weakest among God’s people have ‘ become as David.’ If we follow the light as it is made known to us ; if we deny ourselves, as we see by our increasing light that our indulgences are improper ; if, as we gain a little ground, we fix our stake, and determine we will not be driven back beyond it, how sure and regular our advances towards Heaven ! on the contrary, if we improve not the grace given, our light becomes darkness. We can plead for what we once rejected, and neglect what we formerly could not. ‘ Despise not the day of small things.’

“ We have had a good reformation on Lyndon Circuit, especially in the town of Burke ; about thirty there have lately joined society, and a number more have professed conversion. Some of our circuits are low. I sometimes grow sick of professing Christians (many of them, I mean), because there is so much *uncharitableness* among them ; so many *evil surmisings*, *little envyings*, and *bitter jealousies* :* O, when will

* How often has the devout mind to say with the pious Cecil, “ I have seen much sin in the Church, that I have often been brought by it to a sickly state of

that 'charity that hopeth all things,' at least of our brethren, generally prevail? not until unholy self is crucified; not until self-seeking and earthly-interested views are laid aside, and the glory of God and the good of the Church be the ruling motive of the soul. This can be done only by our doctrine of Christian holiness: I love this doctrine; yet, I confess to my shame, I enjoy less of it than I once did, notwithstanding some have abused and dishonoured it, and others despise it; still, I know it to be the doctrine of the Bible, the truth of God, and the only doctrine that can save the Church. O that I were inspired with holy zeal to preach it!"

At the preceding session of the New-England Conference, Mr. Fisk was elected a delegate to the General Conference, held this year (1824) in May, in the City of Baltimore. He left home on this business the latter part of April, spending a few days in New-York, where, by previous invitation, he addressed the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, at their anniversary held April 23d, in John-street. Many will remember this meeting with interest, from the fact that the eloquent Summerfield, and the Rev. John (now Dr.) Hannah, the associate of the Rev. R. Reece, representative from the British Wesleyan Conference to the General Conference in the United States, and whose ministry was so highly acceptable to our churches, were among the speakers on this occasion. Mr. Fisk, in a letter to Mrs. Fisk, dated New-York, April 26th, speaks of this meeting thus:

"I performed my part probably without much honour to myself; but that is of little consequence. It is more to be regretted that some abler hand (tongue?) had not pleaded the cause of missions; however, a number followed me in interesting and edifying addresses. The other speakers were Messrs. Brown, Reed, Case, (Hannah), and Summer-

mind. But when I have turned to the world, I have seen sin working there in such measures and forms, that I have turned back again to the Church with more wisdom of mind and affection for it—tainted as it is."—*Cecil's Remains*.

field. (He arrived in the city the day before me.) A collection was taken* of about \$160 or \$170. The work of the Lord is going on gloriously among the Indians, as you will see by the Magazine. It makes me think of apostolic times, when the Gospel was first preached to the heathens."

This was Mr. Fisk's first initiation into the missionary work. He caught the impulse of the occasion, and, as his sympathies enkindled and his views enlarged, he became an efficient labourer in the field. This we shall see hereafter. The address delivered by him at this meeting was published in *Zion's Herald*.

The General Conference of 1824 is memorable for the warm discussions called forth by what is known as the Radical Controversy. From divided sentiments on doctrinal points we have very fortunately been preserved, but on church government we have had various controversies; and the very few, and mostly unimportant schisms that have occurred among us, have all been on this account, or from personal grievances, real or supposed. The points under discussion at this time related to a representation of the laity and of the local preachers in our ecclesiastical bodies, and the mode of appointing the presiding elders. This discussion had not attracted very much attention in New-England; but in the Southern, Middle, and Western States it had been carried on with great spirit and some acrimony. On these subjects the General Conference received numerous petitions and memorials, some demanding, others deprecating alterations in the Discipline. Mr. Fisk, though in favour of making the presiding elders elective, was decidedly opposed to a lay delegation. As he was always remarkable for his republican views, some reason for what some may consider an inconsistency will not be out of place.

Those who think the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church anti-republican, cannot be aware how limited is the power of her clergy. It is not known to all that they

* It is difficult to say how this expression came into such general use. We cannot but wish, for the sake of good English, that the word *made* would supersede it.

are entirely dependant on the people for their support. If they have fixed their own claim or salaries, it is still only advisory ; merely an estimate—and who will not say a remarkably modest one ?—of what is necessary for their maintenance, but which the people can withhold at their option. The clergy have no method of enforcing payment. It should also be considered that the ministry originate with the people. No minister can be made without examination and recommendation by the inferior judicatories composed of laymen ; and, indeed, our Leaders' Meetings, held monthly, the Board of Stewards, and our Quarterly Meeting Conferences, secure to our people a balance of power against the clergy, as effectual as could be secured by any lay delegation without them. I should run no risk in saying that the power of the laity in the Methodist Episcopal Church is greater than in any other denomination, excepting only the Quakers, who, however, by their views of the ministry, can hardly be brought to the comparison. Even the appointment of the ministers is not as arbitrary as it appears on a partial view, since the wants and wishes of the people are made known to the bishop by the presiding elders in the arrangement of the stations. The requests of the people always receive attention, and all things are adjusted for the general accommodation. Bishop Asbury, who exercised more power than any other incumbent of the episcopal chair, was always very tenacious, as I have heard from those who knew him, of the people's right to petition ; but on this point there has been no wish for an alteration. The people prefer this mode of appointment as, on the whole, best adapted to our wants ; and if there have been occasional dissatisfaction, it has generally been borne quietly, from regard to the good of the Church. It also deserves to be noticed, by the way, that no member can be expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church without a regular trial before a committee of his peers, with the right of being confronted with his accuser.

This controversy, moreover, did not take its origin from the private members of the Church : it originated with the local preachers, especially among those who had left the travelling connexion, and by thus losing a large share of

their influence and consideration, became restless and dissatisfied; and when once they had thrown out suspicions and complaints, it was not wonderful that they were eagerly caught at, and a theory which had not been fully examined by the people, should be subjected to a rigid investigation. The government of the United States was not organized without rigid, ample, and protracted scrutiny, and a very searching controversy. These remarks are not made by any means in disparagement of the local preachers, certainly a useful, honourable, disinterested class of men; I give them only as belonging to the history of the Church, and necessary to explain the conduct of our subject.*

The Presiding Elder Question, as it was called, was, whether the presiding elders should be elected by the conferences, or appointed by the bishop? It was determined that rendering them elective would present such temptations to intrigue, favouritism, time-serving, and jealousy, that it was safer to leave it as it was.

These questions were debated in the General Conference with a good deal of earnestness and some warmth of feeling, though not with any flagrant violation of Christian charity. But in a Methodist Conference, so remarkable for calmness, mutual deference, and fraternal affection, it was uncommon;

* The views in the text are confirmed by a letter Mr. Fisk received the succeeding year (1825), an extract from which illustrates the spirit that originated this unhappy controversy. After inquiring, Have you ever considered "what an important station a local preacher fills in our Church?" and complaining bitterly of their having no share in the government, and asserting that he had "letter upon letter sent him on this subject," the writer adds, "If this fire explode, I fear it will not end in smoke; I have my unconquerable attachments to the Methodist" (Church) " (though perhaps you have known that I am not much inclined to Episcopacy), yet I am a *located preacher*, and, of course, have no part, either directly or indirectly, in the management or government of the Methodist Church. But I say no more at present."

He seems to have forgotten the Quarterly Conference, the Leaders' Meetings, and the Board of Stewards, of the first of which he was necessarily a member, and was certainly eligible to both the others; or else he forgot the strong "indirect" influence, at least, which these exert over "the government of the Church." I hope, again, that I shall not be understood as disparaging a class of men whom I have such abundant reason to esteem. The spirit apparent in the above extract, so far as I know, has entirely passed away, and local preachers, as well as people, are well satisfied of the wisdom and excellence of our ecclesiastical institutions.

and to a delicately pious mind it could not fail to be painful. Mr. Fisk found but little satisfaction in attending the deliberations. His feelings may be seen, in part, in the ensuing passage of a letter to his friend, the Hon. B. F. Deming :

" Baltimore, May 26th, 1824.

" DEAR BROTHER,

" I have waited thus long with the hope of having something of importance to write to you ; but, truly, we have done business so slowly and so badly, I can hardly give you much, even at this late period, that will be entertaining. But I can tell you some things which we have *not* done. We have not done, and shall not do, anything towards a lay or local delegation, though we have had many petitions to that effect. Even the advocates of such measures think, I believe, that things are not ripe for such a change. We have *not* been agreed on scarcely any measure. We are divided into two great parties, nearly equal : one party thinks some of our Discipline might be altered for the better ; the other is so afraid of reform or alteration, that it is almost impossible to get a single alteration in any point. Here we stand and debate, and do almost nothing. However, we have done something ; we have modified the District Conferences so that, if any district choose, they may refuse to meet, and in that case the business all reverts back into our Quarterly Meeting Conferences. We have made some salutary alterations in the Book Concern ; also in our missionary system. These, however, are of minor importance. We have, or, rather, a *majority have*, passed a resolution revoking the suspended resolutions, as they are called, on the Presiding Elder Question ; it has passed to once reading, and will probably finally pass. This has caused much excitement and much warm debate. I will be more particular if God spare me to see you ; and may that day be hastened ! I am tired of *this* business, and long to be back again to my work. A camp-meeting is a Heaven compared with a General Conference ; still, it is thought, all things considered, we have got on with but little excitement and acrimony, compared with what might have been. We shall rise the last of this week."

His estimate of himself is exhibited in the same letter. After alluding to some of the more distinguished preachers whom he had heard, he proceeds:

“We have, indeed, many able preachers, and I lose sight of my own gifts among them, as comparatively unworthy of notice ; but my gifts are such as God has given me, and on this account I ought to prize them. I cannot be great ; I may be good, and, by the blessing of God, I may be useful.”

Mr. Fisk was one of the committee to draught a reply to the address of the British Conference, sent by the hands of their worthy representative, the Rev. Richard Reece. This document is Mr. Fisk's production. It is admirably chaste, beautiful, and appropriate. One or two passages we introduce, because they serve to throw light on what will soon become a peculiarly distinct feature in his character. We allude to his missionary spirit. In responding to the sentiments of our British brethren on Missions, he said, “We are also following you, though at humble distance, in your missionary exertions. But such is the extent, and increasing extent, of our work here, that we cannot find means nor men for foreign missions. The increase of our population is unparalleled ; and it is widely scattered over an extensive continent. To keep pace with it under such circumstances requires much labour and much privation. In addition to this, the Lord, as you have heard, has opened for us a great and effectual door among the aborigines of our country. These we dare not neglect. They are our neighbours, and we must minister unto them ; they have been injured, and we must make them reparation ; they are savages, and must be civilized. All this shall be done if God permit. We have the work much at heart, and hope and pray for success. In addition to this, we have entailed upon us, in several of our states, a degraded and enslaved population, whose situation is making, if possible, a still stronger claim upon our Christian philanthropy. And, finally, the way seems to be opening for missionary exertions in Mexico and South America.

“With these fields of labour in the midst of us and round about us, you cannot expect us to join you in the great and good work in which you are engaged in the East. Still, we hope the time is not far distant when we shall join hands on the Asiatic shores of the Pacific Ocean. We are constantly advancing our labours towards the West, and you are extending towards the East, not only on the Continent, but over the islands of the sea. Is it chimerical, then, to suppose, that at some future day we shall have encompassed this earth, and girded it round with glorious bands of Gospel truth? O no, Faith says it shall be done.”

Not less characteristic of our subject are the following sentiments of the same document: “And while we are enlarging our work and multiplying our numbers, we trust we have not forgotten that the great design of Methodism, the ultimate end of all its institutions, is to raise up and preserve, in the midst of a sinful world, a holy people. Without this, numbers and influence are nothing. We deprecate, more than anything else, that ecclesiastical pride which builds itself up upon the numbers and popularity of the Church, while that Church is sinking in the spirit and tone of the Divine life. From such a state of things, we, on both sides of the water, are doubtless united in saying, ‘Lord, preserve us; make us holy, and make us instrumental in spreading holiness throughout the earth.’”

While in Baltimore he wrote a letter to Mrs. Fisk, dated May 22, from which we present an extract, as follows:

“MY DEAR R.,

“I am not unconscious of the various feelings and exercises of your mind, many of them unpleasant, and perhaps painful, during my absence, especially in your poor state of health; but I feel a satisfaction in the reflection that you are among friends who can sympathize with you and provide for you; and, above all, that you are in the hands of Divine Providence, affords the highest consolation: and here I rest with full confidence. The same Providence that supports us when together, and without which even our mutual aids and counsel would amount to nothing, has an equal

power and an equal tenderness for us under all circumstances and in all places: that Providence has hitherto been with me since I left home, though amid many mercies I have had some slight afflictions. I took some cold before I left New-York, which increased so much when I got to Philadelphia as induced me to stop two or three days in that city. With some improvement of health I pursued my journey to this place, but continued ill after my arrival, so that I did not attend Conference for about one week, when I got able to attend, and have ever since been gaining. I am now in comfortable health, but my soul is sick—sick, I mean, of the duties and controversies of the General Conference. I shall be glad, heartily glad, when I get to my work again on the Green Mountains: not but I would be willing to submit to the drudgery of this business, if I could thereby benefit the Church; but the truth is, our views are so different and so various, and our mutual jealousies—I say this to our shame—are so great, that we can do nothing—nothing that relates to the great and essential concerns of the Church. We have passed some resolutions that respect private and local questions, but nothing else is done; little or nothing else will be done. O, when shall we have peace? Not, I fear, until the Church is torn and rent by schisms. However, I hope for the best; and perhaps, by the interposition of that Providence under whose fostering care Methodism has attained to its present high standing, we may yet be bound together by the cords of love in the great work of saving souls.”

CHAPTER VIII.

Continued Presiding Elder.—Incident.—Letters of Condolence.—Mysticism.—General Lafayette.—Incident.—Aid to Young Ministers.—School of the Prophets.—Traits of Character.—Incident.

MR. FISK was reappointed the two succeeding years, viz., 1824 and 1825, to the office of presiding elder, and continued to discharge his duties with unabated ardour and faithfulness. The ministers under him also laboured zealously and with success. These were years of great and general prosperity throughout the Vermont District.

He was also a trustee of the Wesleyan Academy, which, as before intimated, was to be established at Wilbraham. To meet the board was often very inconvenient, requiring long journeys; yet he always attended them, and that without missing his appointments, though he frequently had to travel in the night. He also acted personally as an agent in soliciting funds for the institution.

During his service on the district, also, the missionary cause was not allowed to slumber. He brought it before the people in sermons, at love-feasts, and other meetings, and had the pleasure of awakening the attention of many to the subject. The same may be said of our other benevolent institutions.

While Mr. Fisk was on the district, Mrs. F. frequently accompanied him to his appointments, and was thus a participator in his dangers as well as enjoyments.

In the summer of 1824, when they were travelling together, one evening they were overtaken by a terrific thunder-storm. The heavens were black with clouds, the night was already closing in, and they had yet eight miles to go to the nearest stopping-place. We give the scene nearly in Mrs. Fisk's own words:

“My dear husband being familiar with the road, we thought it best to continue our journey. The storm and

darkness increased. The rain poured in torrents. We entered a piece of woods, and went but a short distance, when he observed, 'We must be out of our road: from the sound, our carriage-wheels are on bushes.' We could not discern the least thing; it was, indeed, 'darkness visible.' The lightning glimmered only at long intervals in the distance. Giving me the reins, Mr. Fisk got out of the carriage, and with his hands felt for the wheel-ruts; but finding none, and perceiving, as he suspected, that the wheels were on broken bushes, for a short time we remained stationary, when a terrific peal of thunder rolled over our heads, accompanied with a brilliant flash of lightning, which struck a tall tree not very far from us, and shattered it from top to bottom with a tremendous crash; but it enabled us to see where we were, and we found that we had wandered half a mile from the main road into the woods. The lightning now became more frequent, and during its flashes Mr. F. was enabled to lead his horse back to the road, stopping when the lightning disappeared, for it seemed only to render the darkness 'such as might be felt.' We continued in this way three miles on our journey, Mr. F. leading his horse; and at length, at half past ten o'clock, found admission into a comfortable farmhouse.

"In the midst of this terrific scene, my dear husband possessed the utmost calmness and confidence in God. Amid the warring elements, you could hear his sweet voice singing these beautiful lines of Watts:

"The God that rules on high,
That thunders when he please,
That rides upon the stormy sky,
And manages the seas:
This awful God is ours,
Our Father and our love;
He will send down his heavenly powers
To carry us above;"

and frequently calling to me, as he stood by the head of his horse in total darkness, 'Yes, this awful God is ours.'"

If there were any one trait in the character of Mr. Fisk that shone more brightly than another, it was that kindness of disposition which led him to participate in the joys and sorrows of others. His heart was keenly alive to every

touch of sympathy. To this, in no small degree, was owing the hold he had upon the affections of his friends. A letter which we here insert bears some testimony to our remark. With the lady to whom it was addressed he enjoyed some acquaintance, and had partaken of the hospitalities of her house while passing through his circuit or district. For her and her husband, Judge Williams, he ever entertained a sincere regard. Hearing of the death of her father, the excellent Mr. George Warner, of New-York City, he wrote to her as follows:

“ Randolph, April 7th, 1825.

“ In a visit to the north part of the state, I was informed of your irreparable loss in the death of your worthy father ; worthy, I say, because this is the character that all give him, who knew him, with whom I have spoken on the subject. For myself, I had not the honour or pleasure of his acquaintance ; I had expected this, but the time is now past ; I can never know him in the flesh. But if I be so happy as to make one among the saints of light, I expect to meet your honoured father there, and have the pleasure of forming a heavenly acquaintance with him, unless, as Mr. Whitefield said of Mr. Wesley, he should be honoured with a place so much nearer the throne than myself, that I should scarcely be able to see him. This, however, is hardly a consistent supposition ; for, however rich in faith he was, and however superior his reward may be, there will doubtless be no indistinctness of vision in Heaven ; we shall then all see as we are seen, and ‘ know as we are known.’ But should we need there, as we do here, an introduction to those who were before strangers, by a third person, you, I expect, will be there, and will make us acquainted in Christ’s kingdom. I am expecting, indeed, and praying that your affliction will contribute much towards preparing you for that kingdom. You have lost another tie that bound you to earth, and have gained another cord to draw you to Heaven. You are also hereby taught how groundless are all our hopes of happiness built on earthly good. You can therefore sing, with more feeling than ever,

“ ‘ Nothing on earth I call my own ;
A stranger to the world unknown,

U

I all their goods despise ;
 I trample on their whole delight,
 And seek a city out of sight,
 A city in the skies.

There is my house and portion fair ;
 My treasure and my heart are there,
 And my abiding home :
 For me my elder brethren stay,
 And angels beckon me away,
 And *Jesus* bids me come.'

" Had I seen you when your heart was bleeding under the recent stroke that severed the tenderest ties of nature, it would have been my imperative duty as a minister and servant of Christ, and my highest, though mournful pleasure as a friend, to have attempted at least to administer consolation to your soul. But you have had time to reflect ; you have had time to pray. The first and most furious blast of the storm has gone by : and in the melancholy pause that has succeeded, though you have had time more deliberately to reflect on your loss, and every object around you is calculated to add an additional pang to your pained bosom, still you also have had time to call in religion to your aid. You have called to mind all those precious Scriptures that assert the special providence and fatherly care of your God. You have prayed again and again, ' Not my will, but thine be done,' until the soul, with sweet acquiescence and filial resignation, most sincerely responds to the sentiment, and God's will to you is all and in all. What remains but that you ' reckon yourself dead indeed unto the *world*, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord ;' and, in agreement with this, make the best possible use of the remainder of life, and of life's blessings, which God has put into your hands ; that when you fail on earth, not only your beloved father, but all who have been honoured with your acquaintance or shared in your benevolence, ' may welcome you into everlasting habitations.' "

To the Rev. Joel Steele, on the death of his wife.

" VERY DEAR AND MUCH AFFLICTED BROTHER,

" I have just had confirmed to me the melancholy intelligence that our beloved sister and your affectionate wife is

no more on earth. I need not tell you it has affected me most sensibly. I know of none among all my acquaintances and Christian friends whose worth I more highly prized. She always exhibited those excellent qualities that endeared her to all who knew her. I feel that I have personally suffered a loss. From the circle of my valued Christian friends, one among the worthies is gone. I feel that the Church has suffered a loss. One of its ornaments is gone; and one, too, who, from the station she filled, as well as from the excellences she possessed, was eminently qualified 'to allure to brighter worlds and lead the way.' All this I thought of when I first heard the news of her death. I saw, I, in a measure, *felt*, the bitterness, the inexpressible bitterness of that overflowing cup of sorrow which your heavenly Father has put to your mouth. I beheld you in that heart-rending moment when lingering hope, with an awful shock, was about to have torn from it its last hold on the beloved object. I saw you looking inward to a heart about to be made desolate; outward and around, on your babes about to be motherless; upward, to that seemingly frowning Providence that was mixing for your sorrowful soul this cup of anguish; while your grief, too full to have a tongue, and too expressively intelligent not to be understood, cries out, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' My sighs, my tears, my prayers were ready to mingle with yours; but all is over—Sister Steele is dead! When incredulous sorrow could realize that this was truth, and when the first gust of grief was over in your troubled breast, I beheld you with your heart still looking upward, while religion, with all its instructing and consoling influence, enabled you to add, in the language of Divine resignation, 'Nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done.' To this sentiment my soul says Amen. The Lord write it upon your heart. And here my sympathy for you finds rest, because *here* you find rest. Yes, my brother, it relieves my heart to hear you say, as you have said in your letter to Brother A., which I have just read, 'I will not complain. It is God that has done it; and shall not the Judge of all the earth do right? I feel as though the consolations of religion are my support in this

day of tribulation.' Ah! my brother, what a God is ours! The severest strokes upon his children are laid on with the rod of love. Satan's fiery darts make but a small wound, but they leave therein the poison of death. The rod of God ploughs in the trembling heart deep and painful furrows, but it leaves therein the balm of life, the medicine of the soul; and, by Divine grace, the deeper the wound, the more salutary and glorious the effects. *Yea, it worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

"I spoke of a loss, and so this death seems to be properly termed. But it only seems; the truth is, it is gain; gain, not only to her, for she has doubtless gone to Paradise, but it shall be seen in the issue to be gain to you and to your children, impossible as it may appear. But you may ask, 'Who can supply the place of a mother to my children?' The God who gave them a mother, and hath taken her away. Without him even a mother could do nothing. But, in removing her, has he removed his loving kindness from you and yours? No, he is the same God, and will prove himself such to you and to your household. Trust him, then, trust him forever.

"Randolph, April 6, 1825."

It is a fact growing out of the constitution of the human mind, that no revulsion of sentiment takes place, good or bad, without generating some excesses. Novelty always throws something of a haze over the mental vision, and few possess such clearness of perception as not to feel its distorting influence. The Pietists of Germany, the Quietists of France, the errors of Fox, and even the infidelity of Voltaire, are illustrations of the same principle. Who can tell how many infidels have been made by associating true religion with its abuses? Most errors take their origin from some germe of truth. The sudden quickening of the attention to the subject of spiritual Christianity in the region in which Mr. Fisk laboured, produced some illustrations of our remark. From the utter neglect of the religious emotions, a few ran into the opposite extreme, and made them the absorbing objects of solicitude. The common duties of life were undervalued;

the proprieties of life, "the ornaments of a meek and quiet spirit," the "charity that never faileth" and "thinketh no evil," were displaced by dreamy reveries, or wild and headstrong zeal, or sour and irritable tempers. Lofty professions of spirituality and abstraction from the world were, in some instances, fearfully at variance with the omission of good works, and a neglect of the nicer laws of Christian propriety. To correct these evils, Mr. Fisk wrote a series of letters on Mysticism, addressed to one of the most distinguished of these visionaries. She was a sincere Christian and a sensible woman, but had been misled probably by the ethereal productions of Lady Guion and the Archbishop of Cambray. It is a proof of her good sense that she was reclaimed from her temporary hallucination, and has now been for many years a devoted, exemplary, and practical follower of Christ. These excellent letters will, should Dr. Fisk's works be called for by the public, be included among them.

In the years 1824-5, General Lafayette made his tour through the United States, and was received everywhere with those demonstrations of enthusiastic regard which were due to so disinterested a benefactor of the country. During the summer of 1825 he passed through the Northern States, and among other places visited Montpelier, the seat of government for Vermont. His route lay through the village of East Randolph, where Mr. Fisk now resided. It was the design of the committee of arrangements only to stop long enough to change horses here; but, as their distinguished guest had become fatigued, they determined to prolong their sojourn and partake of a cold collation. The citizens immediately determined to manifest their gratitude and respect by appointing a deputation to wait on him with their salutations. Mr. Fisk was chosen as their speaker. Trusting to the impulse of his own feelings and his ready command of language, in a few moments he was ready to conduct the procession, and offered the following neat and appropriate effusion, in which he not only expressed sentiments pertinent to the object, but also beautifully sustained his own character as the agent of man's highest interests. He spoke as follows :

“ General Lafayette,

“ Sir: Permit one who, though a stranger to the profession of arms, is not a stranger to the blessings of liberty, to address you in behalf of the inhabitants of this village. They feel, sir, that they have no claim upon a large share of your time or attention; but in the *fulness* of their *hearts*, they would express their regard for *him* whose disinterested valour, under God, has been instrumental, with our own beloved Washington, in procuring for them LIBERTY and INDEPENDENCE.

“ We cordially and sincerely welcome you to our country—our state—our village.

Sir, permit me to say, we *love* our benefactor—we *thank* him. We do more: we *PRAY* for him. And we *pray*, sir, that, though your triumph through these states has been greater, it is believed, and more glorious than was ever before the portion of a mortal—the homage being voluntary—that you be prepared for, and ultimately share in, that infinitely more glorious triumph of the Church of the First-born in Heaven.”*

General Lafayette listened to the address with great attention and very evident emotion. As he made his short but appropriate response, the tears glistened in his eye, and as he alluded to the prayer, they could no longer be restrained: they rolled down his cheeks. It was a thrilling moment, combining as it did the loftiest emotions of our nature, those of piety and humanity. The scene had something of the moral sublime. The hero who had braved the cannon's mouth, and exposed his own person, fortune, and liberty for man's highest earthly interests, and now stood forth the object of the “world's wide gaze,” responds in tears at the suggestion of a brighter immortality. The glories of Heaven attract the soul upward from the highest pinnacle of worldly greatness.

We have spoken of Mr. Fisk's admiration of the sublime

* The speech was taken down by several friends and handed to Mrs. Fisk, who, on comparing them together, found that they varied in not more than two or three words.

and beautiful in nature, and of the variety of incident by which his itinerant life was diversified. An account handed me by Mrs. Fisk serves to illustrate these particulars.

"While we lived in Randolph, in going and returning from the north part of his district and from his father's, Mr. Fisk usually took the route by the way of the Gulf Turnpike. This road leads through the gulf from which the road derives its name. This mountain pass was pronounced (July, 1825) by General Lafayette one of the wildest he had ever seen. At that time, for several miles, but one or two small clearings had been effected. The road had been carried along a deep ravine, following a stream between the mountains, sometimes at the base, sometimes on its side, leaving a deep precipice on one side of the road of fifty or seventy-five feet, and on the other side the mountain reared itself, almost perpendicularly, one hundred feet or more: you were now on a level with the stream, now fifty or seventy-five feet above it. Sometimes the lofty, dense forest-trees, rendered more magnificent by their rich foliage, would form an arch over your head and obstruct your view of the heavens. At other times, as the road wound its way among the mountains, you would only see a few yards of the beaten path before you, and the blue sky by looking directly upward. Added to this was the constant roar of the stream, as it dashed its waters from rock to rock, which in the spring, when the snow melted from the mountains, would be swollen to quite a river, increasing the grandeur of the scene.* Here, too, the feathered songsters seemed to vie with each other in raising their loudest notes of praise.

"To my dear husband this was a loved and lovely spot. In summer he loved to pass this gulf just before the sun was going down; and when he could, he always arranged his journey to do so. As we passed, he made the mountains reverberate with his favourite stanzas of 'Beattie's Hermit,' occasionally pausing to enjoy the sublimity of the wild scene, to listen to the echo, and to the evening vespers of the feathered warblers, or the plaintive notes of the whippoorwill.

* It is a peculiar charm of the scenery of Vermont, that the mountains are generally covered with verdure to their very summits.

"In May, 1825, having been detained one day when we were to pass this gulf, we entered it after the sun had set. Just before we arrived near the precipice, we thought we saw in the distance a light, resembling that which is emitted from the shoe of a horse as it strikes a stone. We listened, and distinctly heard the sound of carriage-wheels. The dense foliage of the forest-trees obscured the light of the stars, and rendered it quite dark; and knowing that the road was too narrow to permit two carriages to pass each other without the utmost care, our first fears were that the carriage was approaching us. Again we listened. Mr. Fisk immediately said, 'Whether the carriage is approaching us or not, I know from the sound that *it is on the very edge* of the precipice,' and called to them 'to keep to the right.' Again we listened; but receiving no answer, and hearing the same sound, he jumped from his carriage, giving me the reins; and speaking sharply to his horse to prevent his following him, he hastened on to the carriage, which was some distance before us. It was, indeed, on the very brink of the precipice, resting against a wooden rail, which had prevented it from plunging down, while the rail was actually bending beneath its weight. But for the timely assistance of Mr. F., it must have been destroyed. The carriage contained an intoxicated man, his wife, and two small children. The horse's bit was nothing but a rope, which was so much worn that it was difficult to manage him. But the *man was equally* unmanageable. After Mr. Fisk had with great exertion succeeded in getting the carriage from the bank, he persuaded the man to give up the reins, and requested his wife to hold them until he had fastened our carriage to theirs. He then led their horse, and in this way we proceeded through the Gulf, having nearly three miles to go before we could get to the open road; and deeply did we feel our dependance on our Divine Preserver."

We shall close this chapter with a few gleanings, which we found it not so convenient to introduce into an earlier period of our history.

The reader has probably noticed our subject's firm reliance upon an overruling Providence. This never forsook

him. In the midst of cares and trials, Mrs. Fisk observes, she has often known him to lie down and sleep as calmly as an infant; and when she has expressed her surprise, he would reply, "Why should I be anxious? Am I not in the hands of my heavenly Father? I try to do what I think is right and for the best, and then leave all with him." Thus we have a beautiful verification of the prophet's words, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee."—Isaiah, xxvi., 3.

We have mentioned Mr. Fisk's residence at his father's. It would have been greatly to his temporal interest to have remained there; but when the ministers at the other end of the district urged that it would be better for his charge to have him nearer the centre, he did not hesitate to remove to East Randolph.

As a proof of his anxiety for the improvement of the younger ministers, the following incident may be given: One who was stationed on a circuit near to Mr. Fisk's residence, under his advice commenced the study of the Latin language. It was his practice to come to Mr. Fisk's house, when he was at home, to recite; and to redeem his time, and avoid interruptions from company, the young man always retired to bed at sunset and rose at midnight, the family supplying him with fire and candles; and that he might hear his recitation without interruption, his instructor also rose earlier than usual; but, in consequence of his cough, it was necessary for him to have his breakfast as soon as possible after rising. Hence the arrangements of the whole family were disturbed. Such, also, is a specimen of the energy, sacrifices, and privation of many Methodist ministers in prosecuting their studies.

While on the district, a school or association was formed for the instruction and improvement of the young exhorters and those who had the ministry in view. I am not informed whether Mr. Fisk originated it, but he certainly concurred in it very cordially, and gave as much of his time to its advancement as he could spare when in its vicinity. The Rev. I. Lord was for some time the instructor. Similar associations have been formed elsewhere among the Methodists.

Mr. Fisk did not limit his preaching, while on the district, to his regular appointments. He was always ready to preach the word wherever he could find attentive hearers; nor did a regard for remuneration sway him in the least. He has frequently carried the Word of Life to destitute congregations, not only without remuneration, but at his own expense. He was accustomed to remark that "those who paid least needed the Gospel most," and that he thought "the hardest work grace had to do was to make a covetous man liberal;" and that he feared "more would lose heaven by that sin than any other, because no man would own himself to be covetous, though very few obeyed the injunction, 'Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.'"

There is certainly no situation in life that more imperatively demands elevation of Christian character than that of an itinerant minister; and, as an inevitable counterpart, there are few that present severer tests of the disinterested virtues. From the very nature of the existing relations, great caution is required to guard against the grovelling views of envy, jealousy, and self-seeking; nor can we ascribe it to anything but the special grace of the Almighty, that the body has always, thus far, been preserved in so pure a spirit of brotherly affection. No man was ever more exempt from these vile dispositions than our subject, and no man, probably, has exerted a better influence in this respect on others. As an illustration, we give the following anecdotes: On a certain occasion, he observed a young preacher on his district apparently very much depressed in spirits. His sympathizing disposition led him to ask the cause. The young man gave him to understand that it was an apprehension that he could not meet the expectations of the people, alleging, as the reason for this apprehension, the constant encomiums which he heard upon his predecessor. Mr. Fisk replied that upon his mind it would have just the opposite effect; that, wherever he went, his predecessor was the constant subject of eulogy also; "and I think," added he, "if they love brother L., they will have some Christian love for me, if I merit it; but if they did not love him, I certainly should not expect to excite their Christian sympathy."

But if it is virtuous to rejoice in the honours and prosperity of another when he is justly entitled to them, it requires a still nobler elevation to leave another in undisturbed possession of what belongs to ourselves. At a certain time, several ministers were expressing their admiration of a younger brother, just deceased, for a certain document ascribed to him by his biographer, and lamenting the loss the Church had sustained in his early departure. Mr. Fisk mentioned having met the person in question at the General Conference, and being highly pleased with him, but said nothing about the document.

"You do not think very highly of that document," said Mrs. Fisk to him, after the others had withdrawn, judging, probably, by his apparent reserve.

"Not very," was the reply.

"What do you consider its defects?"

Going to his desk, he drew out the original draught of the document in his own handwriting.

"There," he said, "is the proof who is the author. Your husband wrote it."

"But how did this mistake happen?"

"As I write an indifferent hand, he copied it; and being found in his handwriting, it was ascribed to him."

"But you ought to have the honour of it."

"I do nothing for honour—I have honour enough," was all his reply.

It ought to be considered that at the date of this transaction Mr. Fisk was only just coming before the public, and, of course, a little credit at that period was of much more importance to him than subsequently. The reader, if he please, may compare this with the celebrated incident of a similar character in the life of Dr. Samuel Johnson. After listening for some time to the applauses some friends bestowed on one of Pitt's supposed speeches, published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "I wrote that speech," thundered forth the lexicographer, "in a garret in Exeter-street." The simple divine eclipses the great philosopher. To be indifferent to honour is often, not to say always, the surest way to obtain it.

CHAPTER IX.

Wesleyan Academy.—Removal to Wilbraham.—Government.—Revival.—Election Sermon.—Embarrassments of the Institution.—Theological Class.

WE must now turn our attention to the history of the Wesleyan Academy. When the committee appointed to examine the condition of the Newmarket Academy determined on the expediency of moving the institution to some other place, the people of North Wilbraham offered to erect suitable buildings for the purpose, and pledged their influence to promote the prosperity of the school if located among them. This, in connexion with other considerations, determined the committee to fix on Wilbraham as the location. An act of incorporation was obtained from the Legislature of Massachusetts, trustees were appointed, and other necessary arrangements made to organize the school as soon as practicable. Amos Binney, Esq., of Boston, very generously pledged ten thousand dollars towards the enterprise, and the Rev. John Lindsey was appointed agent to procure the remainder by subscription. The following spring (1825) the buildings were commenced.

The eighth day of November of the same year was the time appointed by the board of trustees for opening the academy. The occasion was celebrated with a little festival, consisting of an address from Mr. Fisk, accompanied by appropriate religious services. In the evening, by the liberality of the citizens, the academy buildings were handsomely illuminated. The address was listened to with great interest, and was afterward published in pamphlet form. It is marked by the author's usual characteristics. But many will be surprised to hear of the manner in which it was composed. Such were the urgency of the author's duties, and the demands upon his time, that he could not command leisure for its preparation except while in his chaise. The whole of it, therefore, was written with a pencil on the road at va-

rious intervals, his hat serving for a desk, while Mrs. Fisk held the reins and officiated as charioteer !

At the ensuing meeting of the trustees, held a short time afterward, Mr. Fisk was elected principal of the academy.

As he still held the office of presiding elder, he did not take up his residence immediately at Wilbraham. Having, therefore, made such arrangements as were necessary for the present, he left the school under the care of Mr. N. Dunn, the instructor selected by the trustees, and returned to the duties of his district, spending such portions of his time at the academy as he could spare from his other engagements.

Mr. Fisk was recognised by the Conference, at its session in 1826, as principal of the Wesleyan Academy, and accordingly prepared to transfer his residence to Wilbraham. With what feelings he contemplated this step, may be seen from an extract of a letter to the Misses Osborn, at Charlestown :

“ You will have learned, before this reaches you, that I am about to transfer my residence from Vermont to Wilbraham. This is no small cross to me. I am extremely attached to Vermont. The Lord has blessed me here ; he has blessed my labours ; he has here confirmed my health : he has done everything for me here, almost. I was born here the first and second time, and I know not but I ought to add the third time ; for here I had restored to me my long-forfeited peace. Twice, when in other places I drew near to the grave, God has upon these mountains restored me to a good degree of health. Here, too, I made my first efforts to blow the Gospel trumpet ; and here I have more souls to my ministry than in the wide world besides. And here—but I forbear to speak of the favour God has given me in the eyes of the people. Suffice it to say, my earthly kindred are here, some alive, some in their graves ; and hither, if it please God, I hope in due time to return, to die where they have died, and sleep where they sleep. Of this, however, I will not be too solicitous. If I can fall asleep in Christ, it is of little consequence where the body rests. It shall be pillow-ed on the bosom of love : it shall be resuscitated by the

Spirit of life : it shall be fashioned like unto Christ's most glorious body ; and then it shall dwell, not in the mountains of this bleak world, but amid Mount Zion's pleasant scenery, and in the lovely groves of a celestial paradise, where saints and angels meet and sing, 'and all the air is love.' O blessed prospect ! O delightful anticipation ! Will it be even so ? Lord, help 'every one of us that hath this hope in him, to purify himself even as Christ is pure.' "—1 John, iii., 3.

He removed to Wilbraham in May, A.D. 1826, and entered upon his duties with great alacrity. These were sufficiently onerous, and multifarious enough to distract most men. The school was new, most of the persons concerned were inexperienced in their business, and the plan of the institution was rather novel ; facts which excluded, in no small degree, the advantages of a division of labour. Mr. Fisk was chief director everywhere. All looked up to him for counsel—steward, teachers, and pupils. In addition, he had frequent calls abroad to preach, deliver addresses, and the like, besides conducting a very extended correspondence.

He was now in a situation for which he was admirably qualified. His education and his natural talents ; his great facility in transacting business ; his knowledge of men, and quick insight into character ; his affability, sound judgment, and practical good sense, were all important qualifications. By these he secured both the confidence of parents and the affection of the scholars. With such a principal at its head, the school rose into a commanding notoriety, and was extensively patronised, not only in our own, but also by other denominations. The institution opened with but seven scholars : during the first term it increased to thirty, and the next year it rose to seventy-five. Its subsequent increase was correspondingly rapid, until in a few years it numbered from two to three hundred.

Mr. Fisk was remarkably successful in the administration of government. His mode was truly paternal. He used the rod but a few times, and then only in extreme cases. He was singularly happy in inspiring both affection and respect. But his government, and the means by which he en-

gaged the affections of his pupils, may be better illustrated than described. On the evening of the simple fête in commemoration of the opening of the school, he observed a little boy looking rather dispirited, perhaps at his being among strangers. Going up to him, he said, "John, what is the matter? we want no sad faces here." Then taking John's hands, he put them into those of a little girl somewhat younger than himself, saying, "Come, M., I must give John into your charge. Do you try to cheer him up." Such an interest in the happiness of his pupils would, of course, secure their attachment. For a specimen of his mode of giving the gentler kind of reproofs, take the following: A young lady had a practice, when engaged in study, of knitting her brows unpleasantly. Passing near her one day when buried in thought, wearing her usual scowl, he passed his hand gently over her forehead, saying, in his pleasant manner, "Heaven never intended that that brow should wear such frowns."

He was remarkable for tact in adapting his admonitions or punishments to peculiarities of character. On one occasion, a student, who was very refractory and obstinate in some aggravated case, was shut up in solitude. After giving him suitable time to reflect, Mr. Fisk went to him, talked with him very seriously and affectionately; then kneeling down, he prayed with him until the culprit was completely melted down and subdued. He ever after manifested the highest respect for his faithful reprove. On another occasion, two of the older students were brought before him for card-playing. He talked to them closely, plainly, and with his usual affection; showing them the impropriety of their conduct, and the danger of contracting a passion for such amusements. They loved him all the better for his faithfulness, and out of mere respect to him, never repeated the practice. They are now both ministers of the Gospel.

Mr. Fisk set up a high standard of moral rectitude in youth. He regarded the conduct of the boy as an indication of what might be expected in the man. On a certain occasion, speaking of a young gentleman in the school who did not feel the obligation to deny himself in order to pay his debts, he re-

marked, "The young man means no harm; it is a defect of his early education, and I fear will lay the foundation of his future ruin. What a fearful responsibility do such parents incur. God will not be mocked! and it is of his long suffering that parents do not always reap what they have sowed. Could parents, even Christian parents, only realize the vast importance of deeply instilling into the minds of their children, from their very cradle, the pure principles of integrity, what exertion would they make to do it, and in what a different world should we live." Then he added, as the tears gushed from his eyes, "What a debt do I owe my parents!"

He always cherished the deepest solicitude for the religious welfare of his scholars. He believed Christianity to be the hope of our race both for this world and the next, and therefore nothing pained him so much as indifference, or delighted him more than attention to its claims. Hence he laboured, preached, and lived with a continual view to the advancement of vital godliness. Nor did he neglect the cultivation of his own heart. Like the Roman general who never lost a battle, he did not say "go on," but "come on." He did not point others to the course which he himself neglected to pursue; his own good sense would guard him from such inconsistency; for

"His wisdom sure on folly's confines lies,
Who, wise for others, for himself's unwise."

His example enforced his precepts, while his avowed conviction of the paramount importance of religion was amply sustained by the subjection of his temper, conversation, and deportment to its laws; indeed, his whole character was radiant with the "*beauty* of holiness."

"Instinct to rouse the heart, and lead the will,
By a bright ladder, to the throne above."

Nor were his labours without success. In a few weeks he had the satisfaction of communicating to the editor of Zion's Herald the subjoined intelligence:

Revival at the Wesleyan Academy.

"Wilbraham, July 7, 1826.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"Through the columns of the Herald we would give a

short notice of the prosperity of our rising seminary, and of the dealings of God with us in this place. Our school has filled up beyond our expectations, having increased since this term commenced to about seventy-five, fifty of whom are inmates of the boarding-house. These are all enjoying a good course of instruction, under the tuition of Mr. Dunn in the male department, with such monitors as he has enlisted for his assistance, and Miss Tillinghast in the female department. The students are generally well-behaved, diligent, and easily governed. This is undoubtedly, in part, owing to that which rejoices us more than anything else—a revival of religion among us. There were several instances of conversions, and some good symptoms of a work of grace among the people previously to the sitting of the Conference in this place, but nothing special appeared until since the Conference; but now a number profess to have found forgiveness through Christ, and numbers more are inquiring after salvation, insomuch that present appearances indicate a general shower of Divine mercy, not only in this parish, but in the south parish and other neighbouring places. The labours of our brethren during the session of the Conference have doubtless contributed to this; and the work has been specially forwarded, under God, by the instrumentality of Brother Maffit, who tarried more than a fortnight after the Conference arose, and laboured much, and with great success, among the people. Of this work our interesting family at the boarding-house have shared a good proportion. I will not name the number who have professed to experience justifying grace, because, among such young persons, in times of great excitement, there cannot always be a strong assurance that the work will in every case prove genuine. A number, however, give good evidence of a change of heart; and I know some of our preachers will rejoice when they learn that some of their children are among the number. I cannot express the feelings of my heart, when I returned from a journey which I took directly after Conference, to find a number of those dear youths who have been intrusted to our care rejoicing in the Lord. We rejoice over them, however, with trembling; we watch for their confirmation

in the Divine life with affectionate anxiety, and constantly pray, 'O Lord! strengthen what thou hast wrought for us.' O that all our brethren would join with us in this prayer! We are the more encouraged to hope the work will prove permanent, because a number of the scholars were confirmed in experience before they came here, whose example and conversation are very serviceable to the converts.

"Should the work increase, you may expect farther particulars hereafter.
W. FISK."

Few terms, if any, elapsed during Dr. Fisk's connexion with the Wilbraham Academy without a revival of religion. At these seasons he invariably closed the meetings at a fixed and suitable hour. On one occasion, however, when he was absent, a prayer-meeting was held in the dining-room of the boarding-house, and continued too late. Returning home in the evening, and ascertaining the fact, he went to the room. There was some extravagance and confusion. He softly opened the door, and as the prayer then in progress was closed, his well-known, soft, and musical voice was heard in one of his favourite hymns. Having sung one or two stanzas, he expressed his gratification at their zeal and enjoyment in religion, told them it was time to separate, and closed the meeting. All felt the reproof, but no one was hurt or displeased. Such was the manner with which he tempered decision with gentleness, and such, too, was his attention to whatever related to the benefit of his pupils.

It is customary in some of the New-England States to open the Legislature each year with a sermon from some clergyman, chosen for that purpose at the preceding session. This is called the Election Sermon. Mr. Fisk was chosen for this honourable office by the Legislature of his native state in 1825, and the twelfth day of October, 1826, was the day appointed for the ceremony. According to custom, the discourse was delivered from written notes; but, for the want of time, it was prepared, like his inaugural address, chiefly in his gig on the road. His text was, "My kingdom is not of this world."—John, xviii., 36. This is an admirable production. It is remarkable for clear and sound

views, lofty eloquence, Christian spirit, and faithful admonition. It is singularly felicitous in introducing, without cant, with perfect appropriateness and good taste, the most spiritual views of the Christian religion. One is surprised to see how much of evangelical truth could be exhibited on such an occasion. But the speaker's own heart was full of it, and hence it flowed forth spontaneously. There was no going out of the way in searching for it, nor any appearance of dragging it in by force.

It may be acceptable to the reader to know something of the scope of this discourse. "It is to be feared," said the preacher, "our politicians are not sufficiently aware how much they are indebted to Christ's kingdom for those excellent principles which form the basis of our political fabric; nor do they seem to be fully aware of the vast influence of this kingdom in preserving this fabric from ruin." The statement of his subject is thus made: "To guard us against a criminal and dangerous indifference to the kingdom of Christ in our political operations, by pointing out the proper relation between Christ's kingdom and the kingdoms of this world, so that the rights of each may be distinctly marked, their due share of independence recognised, and their alliance defined, will be the design of the present discourse." He then shows, in six particulars, wherein the kingdom of Christ differs from the kingdoms of this world, and closes with a pertinent, faithful, yet dignified appeal to his venerated auditory.

This discourse produced a very strong impression on the minds of his audience, and gave its author a commanding place in their esteem. According to custom, it was sent to press, more than a usual number being printed, which was so far from satisfying the demand, that a second edition was published in a few months. It was afterward inserted in the Methodist Magazine.

Mr. Fisk was immediately elected chaplain to the Legislature, and consequently remained in Montpelier. His duties were to open the session each day with prayer, and preach to the two houses on the Sabbath. The latter was always done in the Congregational Church, the only place of wor-

ship in the town. This affords us opportunity to illustrate another point in our subject's character. A few years prior to this, the Rev. John Lindsey was chaplain to the Legislature; but such was the prejudice against Methodism, that it was deemed inexpedient to receive the regular services of the chaplain in the church. He consequently preached in the Courthouse. In 1824, while Mr. Fisk was on a visit at Montpelier, the clergyman of the church invited him to preach for him.

"But, sir," was the answer, "that cannot be."

"Why so, sir?"

"Because you do not admit the ministers of my denomination into your pulpit."

"Oh, but you are not like your brethren; we will admit you."

"You say right, sir, that I am not like my brethren, for many of them are very far my superiors. Nor have I any wish to go where they are not admitted."

Nevertheless, during Mr. Fisk's chaplaincy in Montpelier, he preached regularly in the Congregational Church. A few, feeling indignant at the former treatment of his brethren, were opposed to this; yet he thought it better not to yield to their feelings, and consequently preached, greatly to the satisfaction and edification of the people. The following year the town was favoured with a very happy revival of religion, which many of the inhabitants ascribed, in a great measure, to his able and faithful ministry.

Nor were the remarks in the foregoing conversation carelessly made. Mr. Fisk always showed the same spirit. He made no claims on the ground of superiority. He never wished for greater respect or attention than every minister of Christ is entitled to receive. He felt himself perfectly on a level with his brethren, however young or unfavoured by human advantages; and if any one of his brethren, through inferior attractions or qualifications, seemed to be overlooked or neglected, he would be sure to single him out for more than ordinary attentions and acts of kindness.

For the following characteristic incident, the reader is indebted to the pen of Mrs. Fisk:

"As we were going to attend the Vermont Legislature in the autumn of 1826, my dear husband heard that the young minister of Athens Circuit, on Vermont District, was very feeble; and, contrary to our previous arrangement, Mr. F. felt it his duty to continue his journey, that he might render the young minister some assistance, instead of spending the Sabbath with his aunt at Brattleborough, as was his usual practice.

"At sunset on Saturday evening we had still eighteen miles to ride to accomplish his object, though we were only two miles from his aunt's. Soon after dark a dense fog obscured our view, even of our horse. Mr. F. stopped at a farmhouse and purchased two candles, and lighted one. While he guided the horse, I was able to hold the lighted candle in such a manner (there being not the slightest breeze) that he could see when the wheels of our carriage were in the road, though we could not discern the head of our horse. We had to pass through a piece of road called the 'Auger Hole,' where for one or two miles it is very difficult for two carriages to pass each other. But, through the mercy of a protecting Providence, we arrived in safety at the hospitable mansion of W. R. Shafter, Esq., in Townsend, four miles from Athens, at half past eleven o'clock, just as our last candle was expiring. The next morning we rode on to A., and Mr. F. preached for the young man.

"Nor was this our only ride by candlelight. We were often out in the most terrific thunder-storms, my dear husband being unwilling to disappoint a congregation.

"Before we went to Europe it was very common for Mr. F. to say, 'My dear wife has been with me in perils by day, and perils by night, and perils by land, but I cannot say "by sea."' After our return, he would add, 'I can now say by sea.' "

The Wilbraham Academy during this period was greatly embarrassed in its finances. This was a subject of deep anxiety to its friends, and to none more than to its principal. As the enterprise was new, and its importance was, by many, not appreciated in the Church, it was looked upon somewhat coldly. Affairs wore a gloomy aspect; yet many of the

people, to their praise be it spoken, and some noble spirits among our New-England ministry, were ready to make almost any sacrifice to sustain it. Of this, ample proof was given at a meeting of the trustees held at Wilbraham, November 22, 1826. The prospect at this time was sufficiently discouraging. Everything looked dark, and many began to despond. In this state of feeling, one of the trustees observed that "We shall be obliged to go to jail." This brought from the Rev. I. L. the following answer: "It is said we must go to jail! My brethren, I had rather go to jail, and lie in jail, than that this institution should go down; but God will avert such a dreadful alternative. We have confidence in God, for 'the cattle upon a thousand hills are his;' and we shall succeed!" Such were the difficulties encountered at the commencement of this cause, and such, too, the generous spirits that surmounted them.

But virtue is diffusive, and the faith of one stout heart moves many. Vigorous efforts were now determined on to relieve their embarrassments. Soon after, Mr. Fisk undertook a tour through Vermont and New-Hampshire to aid the Rev. J. Lindsey, who had consented to take a special agency for a few months in behalf of the institution. The amount was raised, and the object accomplished.

This journey produced the following article from his pen:

"ERA OF GOOD FEELING.

"A circumstance occurred, during a late tour to Vermont and New-Hampshire to solicit donations for the Wesleyan Academy, which I deem worthy of public notice. I had a letter of introduction to Colonel B., of Hanover (Dartmouth College), N. H.; and, as I hardly supposed the people in that village would be disposed to do much towards the object of my mission, I had designed to call on the colonel, and then go on my journey. In conversation with the Rev. William W., Congregational minister in N., I mentioned my design, and he suggested the propriety of my calling upon the other citizens in Hanover, and especially upon the officers of the college, and kindly offered to be my company, and introduce me to such gentlemen as he thought would

be favourable to my object. This was accordingly agreed upon, and in the course of a few hours, the next day, we received subscriptions in that small village to the amount of *seventy-five dollars*. Most of the officers of the college, including the president, became subscribers, and all seemed to wish success to the institution. The donations themselves were not more gratifying than the spirit with which they were given. No captious questions were asked, no long complaints of poverty were made by those who gave; though complaints might have been made with propriety at that time, if ever, by the good people of Hanover. They had but a little before completed a fund of \$10,000 for their own college, of which a very generous proportion had been subscribed in that village; and but just before, about \$1000 had been collected in that place for a religious charity by Mr. C., of S.; and, in addition, they had just undertaken to raise a fund of \$50,000 for their own college, \$5000 of which had been subscribed, or would be subscribed in Hanover. In the midst of this almost unparalleled levy of public benevolences, they gave \$75 dollars to an institution 130 miles from them, under the patronage of another denomination, and of which, until that day, they had probably had but little knowledge.

“I call this at least one good proof that the present is an *era of good feeling*. When men of different denominations and of different local interests in literary seminaries, unite their *valuable* efforts with men of other denominations and other local interests to aid the common cause of religion and of science, we may expect such a *holy alliance* will drive sin and error from the field: an alliance, this, which can only exist among men of enlarged and noble minds.

“Another reflection grows out of the above facts, viz., that men are not the less willing to give because they are often solicited and have been in the habit of giving. As in Hanover, so I believe it will be found in other places, that where the objects for public charity are the oftenest presented, there their importance is the most considered, and the duty of giving is the best understood. The yoke of benevolent duties, where it is taken and *worn*, is easy, and the burden thereof

becomes light. It is the man who seldom gives that chafes and complains most when requested to give. It has been intimated by some of our ministerial brethren, that, unless we cease our public and private solicitations for charity, we shall sour our people, and drive them from us. This, however, I believe, is a mistake. If we are careful to solicit aid for only worthy objects, and if we prudently expend the public charities intrusted to us, we need not fear. We have been too fearful of calling upon our people to aid in the great works of benevolence of the present day, and this is why we are so doubtful of their willingness to give. Are Methodist Christians different from other Christians in their dispositions and feelings? If they are, Methodism has made them to differ, for it has selected its adherents from the same mass of population with the other denominations. And are we prepared to acknowledge, that that modification of Christianity which maintains a universal atonement, and offers a free salvation to the whole human family, has a tendency to lock up the soul of him that believes it within the narrow walls of self? Shall those who believe in perfect love to God and man, in complete deadness to the world, in the entire subjugation of the unholy and earthly passions, be accounted less accessible to the pleas of benevolence and the claims of charity than other Christians? It cannot be. Methodism is a benevolent religion. It makes high professions of consistency, as well as of that charity which 'seeketh not its own.' Frequent appeals for laudable charities to men under the influence of such a religion cannot drive them from us, but draw them to us by the strongest cords of attachment. We may, indeed, irritate the feelings of those who have connected themselves with us, not because they have any peculiar attachment for us, but because they think ours a *cheap religion*, and they can live with us without paying for it. Such men ought to be disturbed. They have hung upon us like dead weights, and been sponging around our ecclesiastical gates long enough. If they will not reform, it is no matter how soon they leave us, and it is to be hoped no one else will receive them. The least we ought to do to such narrow, covetous minds, is to make them

uneasy everywhere. Such souls will never be admitted to the heavenly feast in their present state, for there will not be found a wedding-garment in the vestry of heaven to fit them—they are all too large; and they ought to have no seat at the table of the Church below. But, thank God, the great body of the Methodists are not such. If they are deficient in their public charities, it is chiefly because their attention has not been often enough called to these subjects, and their importance and necessity have not been sufficiently set before them.

But I will close this article by adding, that the seminary at Wilbraham, for which the above-mentioned subscriptions were received, will succeed and prosper, unless its more immediate patrons are greatly wanting to themselves. With the best wishes of other denominations, and even with their pecuniary aid in its favour; with a large and increasing number of students, and a prosperous beginning, all that is now requisite is a united effort at this time to relieve it of its present embarrassments, and a steady perseverance in its support. But if a few be left to groan and toil under the burden till they faint and give over, it shall be to our shame and confusion, if not to our overthrow. Let us, then, urged on by the good example and encouraging aid of others, show by *our works* that we are what we profess to be, the supporters of a liberal and enlightened system of truth.

“ W. FISK.

“ Wilbraham, March 27, 1827.”

A passage from a private letter referring to the foregoing incident, breathes the same spirit.

“ Wilbraham, April 2d, 1827.

“ When I was returning I stopped at Norwich Plain, and spent a Sabbath with the Rev. Mr. W., a clergyman of the Congregational order, by whom I was treated like a brother. He took much interest in the object of my mission; went with me to Hanover, and helped me to beg, as if the cause were his own. We obtained seventy-five dollars in that village on Saturday; and in return, I came home with him,

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and preached three times to his people on the Sabbath, and left him on Monday morning, thinking 'how good and how pleasant a thing it was for brethren to dwell together in unity.' When Christians can feel that the cause is a common cause, and will unite in sincerity to help it on, the enemy must be driven from the field."

Subsequently to this, Mr. Fisk wrote a petition to the Massachusetts Legislature, and watched its progress through both houses, by which means a grant was made to the academy of a tract of land, which was sold for twenty-three hundred dollars.

The subjoined article was written by Mr. Fisk. It contains thoughts worthy of consideration at all times, and is entitled to a more permanent place than the columns of a newspaper.

"WESLEYAN LIBERALITY.

"MR. EDITOR,

"I saw in the Herald of the 18th of April the amount that the English Wesleyan Methodists raised for missionary purposes; it was a great sum, and I was led to admire their liberality. My impression is, that the English are more liberal in all their religious contributions than the American people. If I am not mistaken, there are numerous donations, and some large ones, made to that society, the interest of which makes a considerable part of the sum raised. I think that it would be well for the American brethren to imitate the English brethren in this respect. Our society, in many places, are poor, and their dependance for the support of the Gospel is much like that of the first Christians. Among the numerous poor there are some rich men, whose children are in good circumstances, and a part of their rich parents' property would make them as happy as if they had the whole. Some of those rich men are called into the vineyard at the eleventh hour, after they have spent all their lifetime in serving themselves. How reasonable it is that they should leave something to the Church, and thus do good after they are dead and gone. Suppose that some of the rich

are called into the vineyard while young, and the good Lord has blessed them with this world's goods after they 'first sought the kingdom of God.' They have spent all their life-time in doing good; yet, like Samson, they may at death do more than all they have done in their lives.

"If it should be asked how this could be, I answer, it may be that they have been doing good five, ten, twenty, or fifty years; but by leaving something for religious purposes, the interest thereof might be doing good for centuries after they are dead. If some who are able should make donations to the particular societies where they live, being acquainted with all the embarrassments of their brethren for want of property, to make their preachers comfortable until the Lord had blessed the society with competency—then let the trustees transfer it to some missionary society, so that it would be constantly doing good, what immense benefit to mankind they might accomplish! The rich may plead that all they give by donations they take from their children. Poor excuse! The rich generally do not make any sacrifices, although they give considerable towards supporting the Gospel; but the poor have to contend with poverty, and deprive themselves and their children of many conveniences when they support the Gospel. Why shall not the rich man take something from his children, as well as the poor always? I feel thankful for what has been done and what is now doing, but there is a lack yet. I am convinced that there must be considerable exertions and sacrifices made, and a spirit of liberality infused into our people, before they shall take hold of the cause unitedly. If this should provoke or excite any to more liberality, I should rejoice. If the rich think that the poor need stirring up to duty, which I am confident they do, as I am one of them, I should be happy to be addressed by them every week.

"A well wisher to the prosperity of Zion.

"April 24, 1827."

A love of labour was a remarkable feature in Mr. Fisk's character. He was not satisfied with the routine of indispensable duties, nor did he ever shun any feasible addition

that seemed to promise usefulness. Hence, notwithstanding his engagements, he formed a voluntary theological class of students who had the ministry in view, for the purpose of aiding them in those subjects which relate to the sacred office. The course, to be sure, was not very extended nor very profound, but it was as much so as circumstances justified. It was entirely gratuitous, undertaken without any expectation of recompense; nor did he receive any, beside the gratification resulting, save only a handsome copy of the Scriptures as a token of grateful esteem.*

At a certain time, also, when the school was in need of an additional teacher, and one just suited could not be found, he selected a young minister but indifferently qualified, and, that he might appear before his classes with credit, regularly heard him, in his own hours of relaxation, through every lesson: a fact affording some glimpse of the difficulties of his undertaking.

But farther: the institution was unable, in its infancy, to afford the principal an adequate support. Hence, a part of the time, Mr. Fisk supplied the pulpit in the village, and discharged the pastoral duties, for which he received no addition to his salary. The school and the church united in his support. After the church at Wilbraham was supplied with a regular pastor, he preached on the Sabbath in some of the adjoining villages. In several of these, especially at South

* Since writing the above, I have learned that the first theological class in the Wesleyan Academy consisted of but three persons, Messrs. John W. Merrill, Charles Adams, and Edward Otheman. These young gentlemen had for some time felt the necessity of enlarging their theological acquirements; had conversed together and prayed over their embarrassment. At length they determined to request the principal to meet with them once a week to instruct them. They felt that it was rather a bold step to ask him to make such an addition to his labours for so small a number. How great, then, was their satisfaction, when he not only received them most kindly, but cheerfully and promptly acceded to their proposal. Although, therefore, Dr. Fisk was not actually the originator of the class, yet, as we learn from Mrs. Fisk, he had long been meditating something of the kind, and only waited a favourable opening. This was the incipient step to unforeseen results. The trio soon increased to twenty or thirty. The members of the class carried the plan into other institutions with which they severally became connected, and the impulse thus given is no doubt the origin of the present movements in favour of theological education. But for Mr. Fisk's promptitude and devotion, it would not have been commenced, or, at least, not so soon.

Hadley, Ludlow, and other places, he was the means of extensive revivals of religion. Springfield also, South Wilbraham, and, indeed, many of the adjacent towns and villages, were blessed with fruitful showers of grace, in the labours of which our subject largely participated. Frequently, too, feeble as his health was, he would ride six, eight, or ten miles in the evening, after preaching, to be at his duties in the school early the next morning.

While at Wilbraham Mr. Fisk always preached or lectured on Tuesday evenings, in the dining-hall, on some selected portion of Scripture, in regular course. In this way he went through the Decalogue, taking each commandment for a subject. He also, in the same manner, went through our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. We have heard these discourses spoken of as singularly interesting and edifying. On Sunday and Thursday evenings he always, when able, attended the prayer-meetings in the institution. Wednesday evening was uniformly devoted to a social interview, as it was called. To this the teachers and trustees, with their families, were invited, as well as the scholars. After the tea had been handed round, some time was spent in social conversation, and the interview was closed with devotional exercises about nine o'clock. The design of this was to accustom the students to move in society, to improve their manners and social feelings, to teach them to unite the amenities of life with the gravity, dignity, and useful aims of a graceful piety. These little attentions to the manners and feelings of his scholars tended to secure public favour and promote the interests of the school. The scholars were a happy circle, usually very much attached to each other, as well as to their instructors. Whether, however, this intercourse of male and female pupils was likely to have a good influence in other points of view, I do not so well know. Under Mr. Fisk's management, the improper tendencies might be safely guarded against; but in some cases we should have doubts of it.

The annexed account of a revival at Wilbraham Academy I received from Mrs. Fisk:

"In March of 1828, the school at Wilbraham was favour-

ed with a very general and deep work of grace. The work commenced without any previous excitement, except my dear husband's calm, faithful preaching. Our steward and stewardess were truly heavenly-minded persons, but very far from enthusiasts, and we had several truly pious in the school.

"One day, one of the young gentlemen,* about fifteen years of age, said to his young friend, 'Will you set out with me to serve God?' 'With all my heart,' was the reply of his young friend. The next evening, in the social prayer-meeting in the hall, Rufus, in a very calm, interesting, and simple manner, related their determination. It was very affecting. The simultaneous thought, that if these two youths, who stand high with the officers and scholars for their amiable qualities, need conversion, what is my case? seemed to pervade almost every heart, and produce a corresponding effect. There were about 60 students in the boarding-house family, and about 160 or 70 connected with the school. Never have I witnessed such a solemn scene. For nearly a week the regular duties of the school were mostly suspended: nor could you put your foot over the threshold of the door at the boarding-house without hearing the voice of prayer and praise from almost every part of the house. Often, even now, do those interesting meetings come in review before me. If you can imagine a group of more than one hundred young faces, of whom scarcely twenty had seen fifteen years, hanging with breathless interest on every word of their beloved and affectionate principal, with eye fixed, either glistening with joy or dimmed with tears, while the prevailing silence would permit you to hear the falling of a pin in the most distant part of that spacious room, their beloved principal in their midst, in all the simple dignity of an ambassador of Christ, with his little pocket Bible in hand, his countenance varying as he sympathized in their joy and their sorrow, pointing them to the Lamb of God, you may form a faint idea of the scene.

"Its fruit has been lasting; some of them you know.

* Rufus Black, grandson of the celebrated English missionary to Nova Scotia.

Rev. D. Patten, Rev. O. Baker, Rev. Morris Hill, and I might mention a score of others, some of whom, holding fast the faith of the Gospel, have taken their flight upward, and, I doubt not, were permitted to welcome their beloved principal into the joys of their Lord."

CHAPTER X.

Journey to Pittsburgh.—General Conference of 1828.—Rev. Joshua Randall's Appeal.—Bishop George.—Amusing Incident.—Election Sermon.—Honours conferred.—Elected Bishop of Canada, which he declines.—Letters.

THE General Conference for the year 1828 was held in Pittsburgh, Pa.; and Mr. Fisk, having been appointed a delegate, commenced his journey, in company with some of his brother delegates, the latter part of April, going by way of Niagara and the lakes. He shared the usual fate of travellers by that route. He encountered horrible roads, broke down, arrived repeatedly at the end of a stage exactly in time to see the next coach or boat go off without him; was cheated and imposed upon, until he thought that a goodly number of the people, concerned about the public conveyances deserved to be sent to the Penitentiary for the crime of falsehood. He complained bitterly of the roads from Albany to Schenectady, and from Niagara to Buffalo. Experience corrected his misjudgment. "How foolish," he says, in a letter to Mrs. Fisk, "how foolish and ignorant I was to call the road from Niagara to Buffalo bad. So indeed I thought it till I left Erie; but, compared with the road from that place to this city (Pittsburgh), I can call nothing bad that I ever travelled under the name of a stage-road." Part of the way, too, they made quite remarkable progress, namely, fifteen miles in six and a half hours. However, this proved an advantage to our traveller; since, by the courtesy of one of the stage proprietors, he procured a horse, and accomplished the distance in three hours, thus obtaining three hours of much-needed repose.

- The company stopped at Niagara Falls long enough to view that wonder of creation. The effect of this stupendous scene upon different minds would itself be a study not unworthy a philosopher. How various the thoughts and associations it awakens in the diversity of its beholders! Here is a company of ministers, whose thoughts are familiar with

the Divine intelligence as set forth in revelation rather than in nature ; who contemplate sublimity rather in the moral than in the physical world ; and whose meditations spontaneously dwell upon the invisible and eternal. Does this habit of thinking deaden or quicken the sensibility to the beautiful and sublime in nature ? Let us hear. One of them—a person of vigorous and capacious mind, but without imagination, and of phlegmatic temperament—was so excited that he could not be prevailed on to draw near, but stood in mute astonishment and gazed upon the scene from a distance. Some were conscious of something like an impulse to cast themselves into the current, and tumble down headlong with the roaring waters. Mr. Fisk writes : “ For myself, the impression was too awful to be uttered. As I stood quite over the verge of the foaming cataract, with the perpendicular falls (160 feet), the rapids above and the foam below, full in view, it seemed to me, in its ceaseless course, like an image of eternity ; and in its rolling, tumbling, foaming, sparkling billows, its resistless currents, its eddying whirlpools, its all-ingulfing, all-overwhelming torrents, it appeared a striking image of those fiery steepes, and rolling billows, and noisy caverns where the spirits of the lost are tossed in ceaseless horror.” A remark of one of the company deserves to be inserted as quite unique : Standing on the bridge that led over a part of the mighty waters, a little above the perpendicular pitch, after gazing in silent admiration for a season, he turned round, and throwing up his arm, exclaimed, with great apparent feeling, “ I suppose, if all the worlds that compose this vast universe were so united by cogs as to turn each other, here is water-power enough to move the whole.” Did the spirit of utilitarianism ever conceive such an image before ?

They prosecuted their journey

“ Through moving accidents by flood and field.”

“ We were two and a half nights and two days rolling in the mud, sometimes *walking* half-leg deep in clay mortar, sometimes lifting up a broken stagecoach, sometimes going without dinner until nine o'clock at night, and the *whole time* without sleep save what we could get in a stage, sur-

ging worse than any vessel in the roughest sea, and every few moments in imminent danger of being overturned." Mr. Fisk, however, as mentioned before, had, in regard to sleep, a slight advantage over his companions. On reaching Pittsburgh he wrote to Mrs. Fisk again, and after an account of his journey, he says, "However, through the mercy of God, we were all preserved, and brought safe from any fatal accident to this city, on Friday morning, May 2d, but in a miserable plight, I assure you. Some of our company got so nervous from fatigue, want of sleep, and from fear, that they would cry out during the night like frightened women or children, whenever the stage fell into one of the deep clay ditches, of which we had plenty. For myself, I was enabled to feel very calm through the whole, and desire to praise God, to whose kind providence I attribute our preservation and my present comfortable health." Yet his health would hardly have been considered comfortable by most people. He complained, while on his journey, of feverishness, cold chills, and an aggravation of his cough, full violent enough at all times. Tenacity of the vital powers was always a striking characteristic of his physiological system.*

Arrived at his place of destination, Mr. Fisk was soon fully occupied with the business on which he went. In a few days he was engaged in the famous appeal of the Rev. Joshua Randell. This person thought that he had received some new light in regard to the Atonement, and gave birth to his ideas in the shape of a sermon. The doctrine therein set forth was condemned by the New-England Conference, of which he was a member, and he was required to desist from preaching it. To this, however, he would not submit. Consequently, he was brought to trial before the Conference on a charge of heretical pravity. This was in 1826.

The substance of his theory may be briefly stated thus : namely, that the atonement of Christ extends only to viola-

* From Mrs. Fisk I learn, that during his entire journey up the North River he raised blood, and, indeed, was so unwell that, had he not improved on the way, he would have returned. Even as it was, he would have done so but for particular engagements at the Conference.

tions of the "Adamic law," which are thereby unconditionally cancelled; while the violations of the "Mediator's law," the "law of faith," or new covenant, by which we are to be finally judged, are pardoned on condition of penitence, faith, and obedience.

The charge was resolved into two specifications: "First: Denying that the transgressions of the law, to which we are personally responsible, and by which we are finally to be judged, have had any atonement made for them. Secondly: Maintaining that the infinite claims of justice upon the transgressor of the Divine law may, upon condition of the mere acts of the transgressor himself, be relinquished and given up, and the transgressor pardoned without an atonement."

Upon the charge and specifications he was tried, convicted, and expelled. From this decision Mr. Randell appealed to the highest tribunal in the Church, and Mr. Fisk was appointed by his brother delegates to sustain the act of their Conference. This he did with very great ability and power. As the clause in the Discipline under which he was accused is that which concerns "holding and disseminating doctrines contrary to our articles of religion," it was necessary to explain those articles, and to show what were the views of our standard writers on this subject. He therefore explained, in the first place, the language of the Discipline, and then cited at length the testimony of Messrs. Wesley and Fletcher. Then he exhibited the fatal consequences of this heresy: first, in destroying the harmony of the Divine attributes; secondly, in leading directly to various anti-evangelical theories, such as Pelagianism, Socinianism, and Universalism; thirdly, in destroying the simplicity of the plan of salvation; and, lastly, in overturning the cardinal principle of the Gospel, salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Towards the close of his argument, he ingeniously presented the view which an humble believer in the atoning blood would be likely to take of this doctrine; and, to give the greater vividness to his sentiments, he personated such a soul. This affords a fair illustration of his frequent manner of preaching. Thus he expresses himself:

"This, sir, is what so deeply interests my feelings in this subject. This doctrine has 'taken away my Lord,' and has removed him so far over several laws, and buried him so deeply beneath the curse of an antiquated covenant, that 'I know not where to find him.' I need such a close and intimate connexion with the blood of the Covenant, that I wish to come very near to my dying Lord :

" 'To see him heave, and hear him groan,
And feel his gushing blood.'

And it is this method of preaching the Atonement which gives such energy and success to the Gospel. And this, sir, is the way we preach : it is the way our fathers preached. The venerable Wesley, and his assistants in the work of the ministry, used to preach the blood of the Covenant, as it was warm and gushing from the fountain that was opened for Judah and Jerusalem to wash in. According to their preaching, the Atonement was not completed in its merits and efficacy eighteen hundred years ago, but it is a standing sacrifice : therefore they believed and sung,

" 'Thy offering still continues new,
Thy vesture keeps its bloody hue,
Thou stand'st the ever-slaughter'd Lamb,
Thy priesthood still remains the same.'

This finished salvation by the Atonement, for all laws or for *one* law, never, I believe, entered into their creed : and if the departed Wesley were here himself to witness our deliberations in this highest council of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and should mark with what tenacity we adhered to the forms and modes of expression which he has left us, would he not charge us, like our Divine Master, while we tithe mint, and anise, and cummin, not to omit the weightier matters of the law ? Would he not enjoin upon us to guard with a holy vigilance these important doctrines, which are a legacy, not of Wesley, but of Christ himself ? and especially that which of all others is the most fundamental, the doctrine of the Atonement ? It is, sir, in defence of the doctrine of our Church ; it is in defence of the preaching of our fathers, and of your preaching, sir, and the preaching of the great body of our ministers throughout the connexion, in Europe and America ;

it is in defence of all that is evangelical in faith, and all that is dear in experience, that we ask this General Conference to affirm the decision of the New-England Conference in this case."

Dr. Bangs, in his History of the Methodist Episcopal Church, observes,* "After a full, and, as was acknowledged by the defendant himself, an impartial examination and hearing of the case, the decree of the New-England Conference was affirmed by a vote of one hundred and sixty-four out of one hundred and sixty-five who were present and voted on the question, two members, at their own request, being excused from voting either way." This was not only highly honourable to the clearness, force, and eloquence of the speaker, but strikingly illustrative of the unanimity of the Methodist ministry on doctrinal points.

Mr. Fisk, at this session of the General Conference, was chairman of the committee on education—one of the standing committees of the body. The report was his production. It is the most satisfactory and able document which had been presented on the subject. At the session of 1820, a resolution was passed recommending the establishment of a classical school by each Conference; but, up to the session of 1824, only three or four had followed the direction. In 1828, as appears from the report, there were seven schools in successful operation, and three others in an incipient state; while there were two colleges successfully established, and another in contemplation. After exhibiting the condition of these several institutions, the report closes by vigorously enforcing the subject upon the attention of the Church. This exhibits as rapid an advancement in the enterprise as could be reasonably expected from the comparative infancy of the body. Appended to the report were resolutions approving of the general cause, and recommending, in addition, to the academies, the establishment of several institutions of a collegiate character. This document, adopted as it was by the highest ecclesiastical judicatory, and published in our leading periodical, served, no doubt, to give an additional impulse to the cause of education in the Methodist community.

* Vol. iii., p. 386.

On the adjournment of the General Conference, Mr. Fisk immediately returned to Wilbraham, and resumed his duties in the academy.

The autumn of 1828 is memorable in the annals of the Methodist Church for the death of Bishop George. Soon after this event, Mr. Fisk wrote the following sketch of his character in a lady's album. It was afterward inserted in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*.

"BISHOP GEORGE.

"Bishop George has gone to Heaven. He left this world for glory, at the rising of the sun on the 23d of August last; and from the known tendency of his soul heavenward, and his joyous haste to be gone, there can be little doubt but his chariot of fire reached the place of its destination speedily; and the triumphant saint has, long ere this, taken his seat with the heavenly company. And, since he is gone, the owner of this, to whom I am a stranger, will pardon me if, upon one of her pages, I register my affectionate remembrance of a man whom I both loved and admired, and at the report of whose death my heart has been made sick. I loved him, for he was a man of God, devoted to the Church with all his soul and strength; I loved him, for his was an affectionate heart, and he was my friend. But the servant of God, the servant of the Church, and my friend, is dead. I admired him—not for his learning, for he was not a learned man; but Nature had done much for him. She had fashioned his soul after an enlarged model, and had given it an original cast and an independent bearing; into the heart she had instilled the sweetening influences of a tender sympathy, and infused into the soul the fire of a spirit-stirring zeal, sustained by a vigorous and an untiring energy; but, to finish the character, grace came in, and renewed the whole man; and the Spirit anointed him to preach the Gospel; and the Church consecrated him to be one of her bishops. He superintended with dignity and faithfulness; he preached the Gospel with the Holy Ghost *sent down from Heaven*. The unction that attended his word was not merely like the consecrating oil that ran down Aaron's beard, but it was like

the anointing of the Spirit that penetrates the heart. He preached with his soul full of glory ; no wonder, then, that his dying words were, '*I am going! and that's enough! glory! glory!*' Yes, thou triumphant saint, *that is enough.* 'May I die the death of the righteous, and may my last end be like his.' "

We have already had some proof of Mr. Fisk's tact in management and fertility of expedient in difficulties. A somewhat amusing incident, in farther illustration of the same trait, occurred in November, 1828. He received a letter from a clergyman of an adjoining town, bitterly complaining that a certain student of the academy—a licensed exhorter—had been endeavouring to proselyte two young ladies of his charge. The letter is quite remarkable for its peculiarities in orthography, etymology, and syntax, to say nothing of prosody and rhetoric, or logic and good sense. It assumes a very dignified and important air, enlarges upon the duty of "religious public teachers," and the courtesy due to other denominations. It then prefers the charge above named against the aforesaid member of the institution, alleging sundry Lilliputian specifications. In a postscript, it assigns as the reason for addressing Mr. Fisk, first, that he understood that the party concerned "was not in these parts;" and secondly, because he "supposed that the students were sent out into the country and villages around about at his discretion and under his direction."

To this singular billet Mr. Fisk replied that he was both surprised and pained at the grievous complaint alleged against one whom he had before highly esteemed ; expressed his disapprobation of the proceedings mentioned by his correspondent ; that he had, according to our form of Discipline, preferred charges against said student, who would be called to trial thereupon by the stationed minister before a committee ; and that he should depend on him, the accuser, to appear, with what testimony he could bring, to substantiate said charges. Here was an unforeseen dilemma. A letter was returned, saying that the complainant had been a trifle too positive ; that the facts were only reported to

him by others ; and declining to appear at said trial, partly because it would be " quite inconvenient to attend," and also because he had " no particular desire to attend, if it were more convenient." Nevertheless, the trial took place ; and it appeared, from the testimony of the young women themselves, that one of them was a Methodist before she saw the accused ; that neither had been in company with him but once, and that by accident ; and that no such attempt at proselyting had been made. This testimony was confirmed by other respectable persons who were present, and heard the conversation alluded to. The accused was, of course, acquitted. Nevertheless, the same conscientious and delicate clergyman addressed a letter to the minister presiding at the trial, " making himself merry with the investigation, and, by a low anecdote of a sailor, gave him to understand that the committee cleared him because they were determined to clear him, right or wrong : " the same anecdote implying that, if his Church had tried him, they would have condemned him, right or wrong !

Such trivialities would be hardly worth recording, were it not that the follies of some men serve for beacon-lights to others. We give the facts because they may be useful ; to give the names would gratify no virtuous sentiment : let them sleep in peace.

In January, 1829, Mr. Fisk was elected by the Senate of Massachusetts to preach their next Election Sermon, on the last Wednesday of May ensuing. On this occasion he delivered the sermon on 1st Peter, iv., 7 : " But the end of all things is at hand ; be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." It was prepared, like his other productions, in the midst of multifarious occupations, and written partly, if not entirely, on the road. It is a plain, faithful, sensible discourse, though not equal to his former election sermon. It was published, according to usage, by a vote of the Legislature, and also inserted in the *National Preacher*, conducted by the Rev. Austin Dickinson, at New-York.

Mr. Fisk's name had now risen into a very commanding notoriety, and his talents and influence became greatly in request in various important fields of usefulness. He was

solicited, with strong assurances of success, to become a candidate for the vacant presidency of the Vermont University at Burlington. He was solicited to take an agency in the Bible Society. He was requested by the Hampden county Temperance Society to become their agent. He was also appointed, in 1829, a general agent of the Society to promote the Observance of the Sabbath, with a salary of one thousand dollars and travelling expenses. He was elected the same year to fill the presidential chair of La Grange College, then just going into operation; and about the same time he was elected a professor in the University of Alabama, at Tuscaloosa, with a salary of two thousand dollars, and a prospect of being chosen president. But that which had the greatest weight with him was his election, the preceding year, to the office of general superintendent, or bishop of the Canada Conference. This branch of the Wesleyan family had, by consent of the late General Conference, on account of the inconvenience of holding their civil and ecclesiastical relations under different governments, separated from the Church in the United States; and, desiring to retain the episcopal form of government, they unanimously and cordially elected Mr. Fisk to the episcopal office. Though the labour and privations would be greater, and the stipend smaller than in some of his other offers, yet these had no farther influence with him than so far as his health was concerned. Duty was what he consulted; and duty, after serious deliberation, prompted him to write the annexed letter to the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, through whom he had received official notice of his election. Mr. Ryerson's letter was dated November 27th, 1828:

"March 30, 1829.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"My long delay to answer your esteemed favour of November last has not been occasioned by an indifference and an inattention to its contents; on the contrary, the deep solicitude I have felt to weigh the subject well, to watch the openings of Divine providence, and decide in the best light, has induced me to deliberate and postpone my answer to

the present time. All my deliberations, however, upon this subject have resulted in the confirmation of my earliest impressions in relation to it, that it will not be consistent for me to accept of the affectionate and flattering invitation of the Canada Conference. I have not come to this conclusion without feeling the influence of contrary motives. My high sense of the honour you have done me is enhanced by the consideration that the 'nomination was *unanimous* and *warm*.' While I highly appreciate and cordially reciprocate those warm and concurrent expressions of confidence and affection, I also look back upon this union in the election as an encouraging token that my labours among you might be useful. The information I have of the character of the Conference, joined with my personal acquaintance with some of its members, convinces me that whoever superintends the Canada Church will have a charge that will cheer his heart and hold up his hands in his official duties. On this point I have no scruples, and therefore here there is nothing to discourage, but much to invite my acceptance. Equally encouraging and inviting are the growing prospects of your country and your Church, and especially of your missionary stations. These, to a man of missionary enterprise, who loves to bear the banners of the cross, and push its victories more and more upon the territories of darkness and of sin, are motives of high and almost inevitable influence; and they have so affected my mind, that, although my local attachments to the land of my fathers, and to that branch of the Church in which I was born and have been nourished, are strong; although my aged and decrepit parents lean upon me to support their trembling steps as they descend to the tomb; although I might fear the influence of your climate upon an infirm constitution, always predisposed to bilious complaints, yet these considerations, strengthened as they are by a consciousness of my own inability, and by the almost unanimous dissuasion of my friends, would hardly of themselves, perhaps, have induced me to decline your invitation. But, in addition to all these, I am connected with a literary institution that promises, as we flatter ourselves, much advantage to the Church and to the public, but which

is as yet under circumstances that will require close and unremitting attention for some time to come, to give it that direction and permanency which will secure its usefulness. If it should fail to receive that attention and care, not only will its present prosperity be blighted, but all that has been done will be lost. How far my leaving this institution would hazard its standing and prospects, is not for me to decide ; but perhaps it may be just and becoming for me to say that, by whatever arguments it may be shown that another might supply my place in this institution, by the same or better arguments it might be urged that another might successfully fill the more responsible office of superintendent over the Canada Church ; and, while I feel a lively interest for that branch of our Zion, it gives me pleasure to believe that one may and will be selected to fill that place in your labours and affections, of which I am at best but unworthy, and from a participation in which I am detained by other duties.

“ Permit me, dear brother, through you, to express to your Conference, as a body, my sincere acknowledgments for their confidence and affection manifested towards me, and assure them that they shall live in my affections and my prayers ; and accept for yourself my sentiments of esteem and Christian love, while I subscribe myself your brother and fellow-labourer in the Gospel of our Lord and Saviour.

“ Yours affectionately,

W. FISK.”

To some it may appear unaccountable that Mr. Fisk should decline situations so important, and one of them, especially, so elevated and responsible, for the sake of an infant academy. But those who consider his relation to the cause of education in the Church of his choice ; the infancy and feebleness of that cause ; the scarcity, at that time, of suitable men to fill his place ; and the disastrous consequences of a failure in the academy which had been established with such difficulty, and so many expectations, will probably admit the wisdom of his decision. Though liberal to all truly Christian denominations, yet he was, from the deepest convictions of his heart and understanding, a de-

cided Methodist, and conscientiously devoted to her advancement. No offers, therefore, that tended to detach him from her interests, however advantageous in other respects, found a moment's entertainment with him. To such proposals he replied, as when he had a liberal offer to induce him to become a settled minister in another persuasion: "This would build up Willbur Fisk, but it would not build up Methodism."* In the same spirit, he says to his excellent father, in a letter, after mentioning some of the above-named invitations, "All these I have declined. Have I done right? I know not what awaits me here; but my mind leads me, for the present, to keep this post in preference to any other that has yet been presented. Perhaps I shall hereafter be sorry, but I go according to my present light, and leave the event with God. Money looks to me like a trifling consideration when compared with usefulness. It is true, I need a living, but I have that here; and, having food and raiment, I desire to be therewith content."

It is this fact which gave his conduct a loftier moral. He had, indeed, food and raiment, and no more. While he was doing the work of three men, he received but a scanty support for one. This, however, was not the fault of the trustees; the finances of the school were too restricted to allow him a larger stipend; but he found it inadequate to the necessary demands of his station; and, to remedy this, he consented to receive some persons into his family as boarders.

Under other circumstances, the trustees could not have been justified in allowing this. It is much wiser and more economical for an institution or a church to pay its teachers or ministers a salary that will command all their time and attention in the most profitable manner, rather than compel them to spend a great part of it in trivialities, or be embarrassed by domestic solicitude. It is miserable economy to allow a man, whose labour is worth fifty or a hundred dollars a month, to do work that a man might be hired to do for ten or fifteen. Penuriousness is far from being economical. But, in the above case, the motives sufficiently exculpate the parties.

* Methodism, in Mr. Fisk's acceptance, was synonymous with the purest form of Christianity.

In the summer of this year (1829) Mr. Fisk received from Augusta College, in Kentucky, the title of doctor of divinity. At first he resolved not to accept it, observing, "Neither my age, learning, nor piety entitles me to such an honour." Others thought differently; and the title was immediately and so generally applied to him, that modesty and humility required that he should be passive, rather than by a violent refusal make himself an object of public attention and remark.

A few letters, or extracts from letters to his friends, will exhibit something of the habitual tendency of his thoughts about this period, and will form an appropriate conclusion of the present chapter. The first is addressed to one of his former flock, who was spending some time at a southern city for the benefit of her health, where she was greatly exposed to the influence of worldly associations.

"Wilbraham, January 27, 1828.

"DEAR SISTER M—,

"You have been long enough acquainted with me to make allowances for my delays in my epistolary correspondence. I thought I should have written you before you left the state; but, failing in this, I resolved to write while in Boston, during a late visit there. But in this too I failed; still, I remember my obligations, and I feel it my duty and my *pleasure* to fulfil them. I found — in my last visit very lonely; and the remembrance of former scenes and former days pressed upon my mind with great emphasis the images and characters of those who once inhabited and cheered the now changed and almost deserted dwelling. Two only of the seven now remained the tenants of that cheerful and happy habitation, where so many hours of social joys and devout exercises have been spent; but those two remain *unchanged*. A. is the same pleasant and affectionate friend, save perhaps that her flow of humour and bursts of wit have been changed to a more sombre cast of mind by the lapse of time, and especially by a *change of circumstances*. Your mother, notwithstanding the sorrow she has waded through since I last saw her, seems the exact image of herself. I thought, in-

deed, when I first met her, that sorrow had chilled her soul, and cooled her affection for all that were left ; but I soon discovered my mistake ; doubtless, at the first, the past rushed upon her mind, and produced feelings that she could not immediately overcome ; she soon rose above them, and I found her the same I have ever found her since our first acquaintance. Her uniform friendship to me, her repeated proofs of kind feeling, will not be easily forgotten.

"I went the accustomed round in —, enjoyed my usual satisfaction in visiting those whose interest once lay so near my heart, and in whose service I had wellnigh laid down my life. I find the flock still small and feeble ; they have a little strength left, and have not, I trust, as a body, denied the Saviour's name, though some have turned again to folly, and others, I hope, have gone to Heaven. May the remainder get safe through in due time, and walk with Christ in white, being found worthy. My sister, may this be your happy lot. God forbid that the flatteries of this world, or the gilded prospects of earth, should ever draw you from the simplicity of the Gospel as it is in Christ Jesus. Will you pardon me when I tell you *I fear*? Already I see, or think I see, the blandishments of worldly hope, and the influence of worldly associations, have stirred up the rudiments of pride and ambition that were once, by the influence of grace, precipitated to the bottom and rendered almost invisible, and the pure waters of heavenly-mindedness and spiritual devotion, that once shone in your bosom with such holy transparency, may have become defiled thereby. Is it not so? Is there not cause to fear? But I forbear by commending you to God, and praying that your faith fail not. I am also admonished that I have cause of fear for myself, and that I ought—as over you, so over myself—to be jealous with a godly jealousy. Permit me to entreat of you to return in the spring. If you do not wish to find your grave in the South, return. I am fearful it will not be the best for your spiritual health to stay too long in —, and I am very confident it will be at the hazard of your life if you attempt to summer there."

To the Misses O.

“Wilbraham, February 12th, 1828.

“I RECEIVED your friendly letter, dear sister or sisters, for which I thank you. I arrived home the second day after I left Boston, without suffering any serious inconvenience, though the weather was extremely cold. My health, however, was somewhat impaired, but is now restored. My family is in usual health, and our concerns here are prosperous. But God has been speaking to the people of this place by death and sickness, and it remains to be proved whether the people will *hear*. We have at present no special move among the people. As for myself, I find my business engrossing all my time, and, when it comes Sabbath, I try to preach the best I can; sometimes with some satisfaction to myself, and at other times I find my communications, like the bones of Ezekiel’s vision, ‘very dry.’ I have, however, some satisfaction in reflecting upon the pleasant season I had in Charlestown and Boston when I was down; and especially does it give me satisfaction to think your little society appeared to be rising, and its prospects brightening. I hope these appearances will not prove to be deceptive; and I am sure they will not, if you all stand in the liberty of the Gospel, wherewith Christ has made you free. I think, when our dear friends in Charlestown all learn to go and tell their brother or sister their faults, in the spirit of love and meekness, then they will find their words of love drawing them closer and closer together. I hope all will learn this lesson; and I hope you, my dear sisters, will get your own souls under the droppings of the Holy Sanctuary, and feel that constant communion with God, and refreshings from the presence of God, that will cheer your souls, and strengthen your faith, and confirm you in grace; and I hope, too, I shall have an interest in your prayers, that my soul may be always alive in the holy exercises of faith and love.

“I heard last Sabbath a very devoted young person give in a remarkably clear testimony in favour of that perfect love which casteth out fear, and her very words carried conviction that it was even so. It was something like some of

those testimonies I used to hear in Bromfield-lane Vestry in former years. O, there is something so convincing, so heavenly, so solemn in the spiritual communications of a full heart, that nothing on earth can equal it. May God give us all that fulness."

To his Mother.

"Wilbraham, September 3, 1838.

"DEAR MOTHER,

"I take this opportunity to fulfil my promise, made in my last letter to father, that I would soon write to you. The *soon* has not come very quick, you may think; however, it has not been out of my mind; but for want of time how to perform what I promised, I have found not. We have had our annual trustee meeting since I returned from Conference, and also a meeting of our board of visitors; which, together with the reports I have had to prepare for them, the attention I have had to pay to students who were leaving at the close of the term, attending the dedication of a meeting-house down in Connecticut, and also a camp-meeting; attending to the necessary preparation for furnishing my house and getting into it; visiting a reformation at South Hadley Canal, and labouring some there, and forming a society, all have contributed, as you may well suppose, something to that tax which has claimed the whole of my time and attention since I returned home; and even now, were it not for the affliction of a severe cold, by which I am prevented from being abroad on business, I know not that I should find time to stay to write to you. Do not think, however, that, amid my various duties, I have lost any sense of my obligations to my parents. This is certainly not true. It has been said that parents will not forget *their* children, but children may *their* parents. I cannot answer for others, but this saying is not true in my case. I feel my obligations to my parents, to do all in my power to give them aid and comfort, strongly as ever. I owe too much to my parents to suffer time, or distance, or circumstances to efface their image from my heart. I have indeed, dear mother, sympathized with you in your late affliction, and should have been

glad to visit you before this, if I could have found opportunity. I rejoice, however, to hear that the comforts of that salvation which you have so long professed and enjoyed have sustained you ; yea, and I hope that this affliction has, even here, wrought out for you a greater degree of this salvation than you have ever before experienced. Perhaps your heavenly Father saw that there was some imperfection of experience, some defect in one or more of the Christian graces, or some want of reconciliation to existing circumstances, which nothing would so readily remedy as the present affliction. When its bitterness shall have passed away, God grant that it may be found a message of love from his paternal hand !”

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CHAPTER XI.

Controversy.—Freemasonry.—Universalism.—Temperance.—Sermon on the Law and the Gospel.—Official Conduct.—Conversation.

PROBABLY no man possessing the requisite qualifications for effecting important changes in human conduct and opinions has escaped the elements of commotion. "I came," said the Saviour, "not to send peace on earth, but a sword." Where some one strong quality has a decided preponderance in the character, this is most likely to be the case; but, even where one possesses that harmony and equipoise of qualities necessary to constitute a mediator—a reconciler—he will not always escape contention; on the contrary, standing in the breach, and bidding the combatants on either side to sheath their swords, he encounters danger from both parties. Mr. Fisk was an illustration of these remarks. Hitherto we have contemplated him only as a Christian minister, distinguished chiefly by superior talents, and deeper devotion to the objects of his sacred calling. Hereafter he will appear more as a controversialist; yet controversy was never his delight. He engaged in it only under an imperative sense of duty, and then with great reluctance. It is only such a spirit that is fit for controversy. Such a one is not likely to engage in it from impure aims. A thirst for distinction or an eagerness for conquest will not needlessly prolong it, and no ebullition of temper or sophistical devices mark its progress. He pursues not truth at the expense of charity; he wars not in the cause of righteousness with carnal weapons.

In the years 1826 to 1829, the churches of New-England were seriously agitated on the subject of Freemasonry. Prior to this, many serious and sensible Christians had been somewhat scandalized by their clergy attending the lodges. Yet they did not look on this superfluous remnant of a dark and troublous age—an institution for mutual protection and defence inconsistent with social and political equality—as

being at variance with the civil compact, and the mutual and equal obligations between man and man, but rather as a piece of puerility and folly. A very different view was taken after the tragedy at Batavia, when the people saw that the obligations of the fraternity were regarded as paramount to those of law, liberty, and religion. The excitement then became very great, not only in our own, but also in other denominations. Many would not hear Masons preach; they would leave the house if one even went into the pulpit to close the service, or attempted to lead in prayer. The Masons, on the other hand, had their supporters; and thus many churches were most painfully rent and distracted. In this state of things, many eyes were turned towards Mr. Fisk. His well-known moderation, judgment, and decision, joined to his superior abilities, presented him as a guiding mind to the Church in this emergency. Various letters were accordingly addressed to him by influential persons in the Church, requesting his advice and friendly offices. From a state approaching to indifference on the subject, he now became decided in his opposition to the society; yet he never went to extremes. He distinguished between the society and individuals, between Freemasonry and Freemasons. But, while he could not brand every individual as criminal, he still thought it due to the sentiments and peace of the Church that every member of the lodge should give satisfaction to the Church, and that the Church, on its part, should be content with what was reasonable. With these views, he drew up sundry resolutions, which, by the aid of his friends, he succeeded in getting through the Conference, at its session in 1829. The first of these resolutions disclaimed all "connexion whatever with speculative Freemasonry," and considered "any member who should disregard" it as "offending against the authority of the Conference;" the second was a covenant to "avoid all such questions and measures, *for* or against Masonry, as produce excitement and stir up strife among the people;" and the third was an exhortation to the people to conduct themselves peacefully, and to receive as ministers of Christ such as might labour among them agreeably to these mutual promises. After

nearly an hour's discussion, the resolutions passed by a very large majority, if not unanimously. Nevertheless, after the Masonic members came to reflect, some thought they had conceded too much, and Mr. Fisk accordingly received some letters complaining of dissatisfaction, and even disgust, at the measure; but the agitation ultimately subsided. Masonry had already, in fact, received its mortal stroke, and, after a few expiring throes and paroxysms, the subject was buried among the things that have been.

In the year 1827, the Rev. T. Merritt, stationed at Springfield, Massachusetts, believed the interests of truth required him to enter on a public examination of the doctrines of Universalism. With becoming candour, he gave notice of his intention to the Universalist minister, Mr. Paige. The issue was a public discussion between them. The parties agreed to write their discourses, and the notes of each were placed in the other's hands to make out his reply. This arrangement has very obvious advantages over the more common method of giving extemporaneous harangues, which gives such unfair advantage to a shrewd flippancy over solid reasoning. It was understood at the time that the principal of the Wesleyan Academy would probably take some share in the controversy, to which, we believe, no objection was made. When, therefore, the agreement with Mr. Merritt was concluded, Mr. Paige was informed that Mr. Fisk was about to deliver one or two lectures on the subject in the Methodist Church, to which, if he saw proper, he might reply, but that, in case he should, his opponent would probably follow with a rejoinder. This offer Mr. Paige saw proper to decline. The lectures, however, were delivered, and are contained in Mr. Merritt's *Universalist Controversy*. There was a most vehement effort on the part of Mr. Paige and his abettors on this occasion to injure Mr. Fisk's character: but the circumstances are not worth recording. Suffice it to say, that they proved not less impotent than malicious. Their darts fell harmless at his feet, or recoiled upon the heads of his assailants.

The year 1827 is the date of Mr. Fisk's embarking in the Temperance enterprise, which ever after made an important

feature in his history. His attention had, before this period, been drawn to the subject, not only from beholding the great prevalence of inebriety in the land, but especially from observing that even the Wesleyan societies were suffering fearful ravages from this fell destroyer. It is true, the testimony of their venerated founder was clear and strong; it is also true, though the point has been contested, that in the first editions of the Wesleyan Discipline, using, making, and selling ardent spirits were expressly prohibited. But such was the difficulty of carrying this rule into effect, especially in the agricultural districts at a distance from market, where the inducement to convert the grain and fruit into liquor was very strong, that the rule, out of accommodation to public sentiment, was so modified as only to forbid "drunkenness, or drinking spirituous liquors unless in cases of necessity." Thus we had many members who made and sold ardent spirits, and many more who gave such latitude to the condition expressed in the rule as to drink whenever they chose. The consequence was the generation of an appetite for them among many, and the creation of habits of inebriety. Hence there were more instances of degradation from the ministry, and of expulsions from the Church, from this than from any other cause, perhaps than all others put together. These things Mr. Fisk saw, and they deeply affected him. Even in his own neighbourhood, in his circle of familiar friends, a member of the Church, a trustee of the academy, owned a distillery, and carried on an extensive business, using the article so freely himself as to create serious alarm among his friends. Yet there was no remedy. The Church did not prohibit the manufacture and sale, and he only drank when he thought it necessary. What was true in Massachusetts and Vermont, was equally true in other sections, and perhaps more extensively so in the Southern and Western States, where the climate was then thought to render artificial stimulants indispensable.

It was, therefore, with great satisfaction that Mr. Fisk hailed the formation of Temperance Societies. He perceived that the light in which they presented the subject, the information they would diffuse, the energy that would arise from

combined action, and especially when the influence of the most learned, able, and respectable men of all parties and opinions could be enlisted in the cause, were just what were wanted. Wisely auguring the most beneficial results from the enterprise, he did not fail to enter into it with all his heart.

In the month of April, 1827, on the annual fast-day, discourses on Temperance were delivered in the churches at Wilbraham in the morning, and in the afternoon a meeting of the students of the academy took place, for the purpose of organizing a society. It is thus mentioned in a communication of Mr. Fisk to the editor of *Zion's Herald* :

“The meeting of the students took place that very afternoon, and it proved a most interesting season. A number of young men spoke on the subject with much judgment and feeling, and facts were adduced, not only illustrative of the evils of intemperance, but also showing the uselessness of ardent spirits in those cases where men have thought they could not do without them; and also showing how a temperate use of ardent spirits in families frequently led some of the members of such families to intemperance and ruin. Where all was interesting, it is difficult to select; one or two facts, however, I have retained, and will communicate. One young gentleman stated that he had been acquainted with a blacksmith in the City of New-York, who worked upon anchors and other heavy work, and thought it necessary, in his severe labour, exposed to so much heat, to drink ardent spirits daily. He was converted, and made a public profession of religion; but still thought, like all the rest of the community, his business required the use of spirits. He found, however, that at night, after labour, he would be heavy and dull, and unfit for devotion; he supposed it might be from the use of distilled liquors; he therefore left it off entirely, and found not only that he could perform his work as well or better than before, but also that his mind was much more lively, and his animal spirits more vigorous, when his daily task was done. This, it is believed, would prove true in all cases.

“ Another said that a clergyman, a distant connexion of his father’s family, lived till he was a hundred years old, in the daily use of ardent spirits; very temperately, however, measuring to himself one half glass daily: he also used to deal it out temperately to his family. He had ten sons, all of whom became intemperate, and their children after them; so that, it was now thought, there were forty drunkards among the old clergyman’s descendants, all evidently made so by the gentleman’s temperate use of ardent spirits in his family. How many, in like manner, make drunkards in their families, unconsciously and undesignedly, by the custom of using spirits among their children, workmen, and visitors! And yet the same practices are persisted in, as if such a course were not dangerous, but absolutely essential to life. Till sober and temperate men wake up to a sense of this subject, and adopt for themselves and households the scriptural maxim, ‘Touch not, taste not, handle not,’ we never can expect a reformation in society.”

We add another extract from the same communication. Marking the commencement of an important era in the history of society, it cannot fail to be interesting.

“ At a meeting of the citizens of the town, in which the different denominations united, a committee was appointed to draught a constitution for a society, which constitution was reported at an adjourned meeting, and was amply discussed. A number were prepared to sign it, but others hesitated: to resolve not to use ardent spirits themselves, nor permit it to be used in their families, seemed so much like entering into a new world, and adopting new modes of life, that they hardly knew what to say or do. That such a course was necessary seemed to be very generally admitted, but how to perform they knew not. However, it was at length determined to adjourn the meeting until the fourth of July next, and a committee were appointed to make choice of one to deliver a public address on the subject at that time. But, before the meeting broke up, the following resolution was adopted almost unanimously, viz.:

“ ‘*Resolved*, That we will practise ourselves, and endeavour to have practised in our families, the spirit of the constitution that has been reported to this meeting.’

“ In short, the subject has excited much attention ; and though some opposition has been stirred up, yet some apparent good has been effected. Several gentlemen of influence in the place have renounced the use of spirits altogether, and the bottle has been banished from a number of families. The importance of the subject is much thought of by those who before thought but little of it ; and, possibly, an impression has been made on some minds which will not be readily effaced.

“ *Quere.* Would it not be well for ministers to preach expressly on this subject, and aim their arguments not so much at the drunkard, for his case is almost hopeless, as to the practices of temperate men ?

“ W. FISK.

“ Wilbraham, Mass., April 19, 1827.”

But Mr. Fisk did not enter upon this undertaking without much opposition and some obloquy. It arose, too, where he had not anticipated it, and therefore he felt it more keenly, namely, among his own brethren. Some of them were reluctant to enter into the measure. The stand taken by the eminent founder of Methodism on the subject of ardent spirits, the high ground taken by the Methodist Church, and the prohibitory rule in the Discipline, led them to believe that, however necessary temperance societies were in the community at large, or even in other churches, they were not required among us. They claimed to be a temperance society already. Some things also occurred at the commencement of the enterprise rather unfortunate. One was, a proposal by the National Society to raise a permanent fund of twenty thousand dollars for the support of a special agent. To this they objected, partly because they were always opposed, somewhat unreasonably, perhaps, to special agencies for religious and charitable purposes, believing the regular ministry the best agency, and partly because they had always seen such funds in the hands of one denomination not mark-

ed by great liberality towards them, whose power they supposed it would augment. Another error was the utterance of unguarded expressions, which sometimes gave offence or awakened distrust. One made an injudicious comparison between the excellent and successful agent of the American Temperance Society, the Rev. Nathaniel Hewitt, and the Rev. John Wesley, whom the Methodists justly delight to honour. The assertion was, that "but for temperance societies, the voice of Hewitt would have been as inoperative as that of Rush or Wesley." Another asserted that the temperance societies were composed of the sober men of all parties, thereby charging all with intemperance who did not join them. These, it is true, were small matters; but when the mind is not fully convinced of the propriety or necessity of any step, small objections become great obstacles. It shows, moreover, that they who are "had in reputation for wisdom," should beware of the "dead flies" which spoil the precious ointment.

Mr. Fisk very much regretted that the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, the official organ of the General Conference, took a decided stand against him. The very excellent and able editor of that paper, residing in the City of New-York, was less conversant with the state of the Church generally, in regard to Temperance, than clergymen residing in the country, especially in the agricultural districts. Hence, while he approved of the enterprise so far as others were concerned, and wrote and published in favour of the general undertaking, he did not think the Methodists called upon to take any part in it by joining the National Society. It should be known, too, that the *Christian Advocate*, even at that early period, had not less than fifteen thousand subscribers, and perhaps sixty thousand readers.

Notwithstanding the opposition, Mr. Fisk was generally treated with great respect and courtesy; yet some allowed their prejudices to carry them beyond the bounds of charity. He was suspected of impure motives, aims at popularity, worldly influence, truckling to other denominations, and the like; while one person, who had no little influence in the Church, said "he had allowed the Presbyterians to cast a

veil over his eyes." But none of these things moved him. Calmly he pursued his determined way. He spoke, wrote, and travelled in behalf of the cause, and had the satisfaction to see his labours crowned with success. Many were convinced. He had the farther satisfaction to see many of his private friends enter into his views ; among others, the trustee of the academy already alluded to became a convert to the new opinions, abandoned his distillery, confessed his error, and came forth a decided supporter of the Temperance measures.

A little incident exhibits at once the feeling of the Church in many places, and our subject's firmness and independence where duty was involved. Going by invitation to deliver an address on Temperance at a certain town in Connecticut, he was met by a member of the Church, by whom he was strongly advised to alter his purpose. The reason given was that the Church in that place was opposed to the Temperance movement ; some were engaged in the trade in ardent spirits, and others did not feel any necessity for agitating the question. In short, if he persisted, it would create, it was alleged, such division of feeling as would ruin the Church. "Sir," said Dr. Fisk, "*if the Church stands on rum, let it go !*" He delivered his address notwithstanding, but without any such disastrous effects.

Meantime the cause was gaining constant accessions of strength, even among the Wesleyan societies. Several Quarterly Meeting Conferences avowed the total abstinence principle publicly: that of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, in June, 1828, Litchfield, Genesee Conference in September, and Bedford, in Virginia, and that of Grove Circuit, Georgia, the next year. In the autumn of 1829, at a camp-meeting held in the town of Somers, Connecticut, the preachers consulted together, and adopted a series of resolutions in favour of temperance societies, which were forwarded by Dr. Fisk, accompanied by remarks in support of them, to the editor of the Christian Advocate. They were inserted, but the same number contained a long editorial decidedly maintaining the former ground. But, to compensate for this, Dr. Fisk soon after received an interesting let-

ter from Washington, Pennsylvania, from several class-leaders, strongly commending the course he had taken, disapproving of the views held out in the Advocate, and urging him to perseverance. This, no doubt, was greatly refreshing to his spirit, and the more so, since it came from so great a distance, and where he was personally unknown.

Facts were now multiplying with astonishing rapidity, demonstrating the utility of the undertaking. In January, 1830, the third anniversary of the American Temperance Society was held in New-York City. From the managers' report it appeared, that during the year the number of State societies had increased from four to eleven, and three more were about to be formed, while the whole number of local societies was 1015, numbering not less than 100,000 names. More than 700 reformed inebriates were reported during the year; fifty distilleries were discontinued; and in one case, when the property of a bankrupt distiller was offered at public sale, not a single bid for it could be obtained. A decrease of sales was reported from some towns in almost every state, varying in amount from one fourth to nine tenths of the whole, and in some places the trade was totally abandoned. More than 400 had relinquished the trade from conviction. A single town in Vermont had saved by temperance in one year \$8400, and the State of New-Hampshire was reported to have saved \$100,000 thereby.* These facts, not easily repelled or answered, greatly encouraged Dr. Fisk and the friends of the cause to continue their exertions.

As the New-York Conference has the supervision of the Book Room, and, consequently, the official periodicals of the Church, Dr. Fisk was extremely desirous of gaining its influence on the right side. With this view, he attended the Conference in May of this year, intending to present a memorial on the subject; but the necessity for this was happily superseded. The Conference appointed a committee

* Not the smallest testimony to the progress of the Temperance reformation was the reply of the agent of a French importing-house, when applied to for a freight of brandy to this country. "No, no," said the man of observation, "de devil is getting out of de 'Mericans: dey drink no more brandies."

to take the cause of Temperance into consideration, with Dr. Bangs for its chairman. Their report was satisfactory to the friends of Temperance. It commenced with noticing the importance of the cause; explained the views of the Church up to this period on the subject, assigning the reasons why it had not united with the National Society; enumerated some of the benefits which had already resulted from the enterprise; and finally recommended the formation of Temperance Societies in all our congregations. The report was adopted, and published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. The New-England Conference adopted a yet stronger report; other Conferences followed their example, and the cause gradually extended until it pervaded nearly the whole Church. At first it was only intended to operate in the Church; but it was soon seen that, though this would purify its skirts from the pollution, yet it would not exert so extensive an influence as uniting in the general cause. Sectarian feelings gradually yielded to a spirit of more enlarged philanthropy, and the whole Church united in the great national enterprise. Dr. Bangs, with characteristic frankness and candour, changed the course of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and made it one of the most efficient aids in the country to the noble enterprise, to which it has ever since given a decided support.

At the session of the New-England Conference in 1829, Mr. Fisk preached from Rom., viii., 2, 3, 4, a sermon on the distinctive properties of the Law and the Gospel. This discourse was admirably timed and ably executed. It gave a clear exhibition of a subject lying at the basis of the evangelical theory. On three accounts it was particularly acceptable to the auditory, especially to the members of the Conference. It served to settle the minds of many who were involved in no little confusion on the subject; it threw additional light on the errors of Mr. Randall, and dispersed the remnants of the fog he had created; and it exposed the inconsistencies of Unitarianism. A system that rejects a vicarious sacrifice is utterly at variance with the relations exhibited in the sermon as existing between the Law and the Gospel.

The Conference, by a unanimous vote, requested the publication of this discourse. To this the author at first objected, fearing some of his positions would be assailed, and involve him in controversy. At length he yielded, and his anticipations, to some extent, were realized. One point was disputed by many, both of our own and other denominations: "It is," says the sermon, "this Gospel grace that constitutes man a free moral agent, and restores to him the power of choice which he lost through sin." But there was a great want of logical precision in the statement of the objection. The preacher did not assert that the Gospel constitutes man a moral agent, for on this there would have been no disagreement: but he asserted that he was hereby "constituted a *FREE moral agent*." The proper inquiry, therefore, should have been on the force of the epithet "*free*," as qualifying "*moral agent*." Now it evidently implies that some moral agents are not free, otherwise the word means nothing—is a mere expletive. This being so, the sermon does not deny, it rather asserts, that fiends and lost spirits are moral agents, *i. e.*, beings capable of moral action, and therefore punishable, notwithstanding they can will only one way, and therefore are not free. They are held under chains of darkness and sin; are under an everlasting necessity of sinning, superinduced by their wilful conduct: they are, therefore, according to the sermon, not "*free moral agents*." They could become such only by having the power to choose good restored to them, *i. e.*, being replaced in a state of probation; and in this sense our author contends that "Gospel grace constitutes man a *FREE moral agent*, and restores to him the power of choice (of choosing good) which he lost through sin."

It was painful to Mr. Fisk that this sermon gave dissatisfaction to some of his intimate associates in the ministry. One of these wrote an article in the *New-England Herald*, setting forth his objection. It may be briefly stated thus: the sermon denies to the Gospel the nature of Law, whereas the Gospel contains a rule of life. This article was ably answered by, as is understood, the Rev. T. Merritt. The objection arises from not distinguishing between the essential

character of the Gospel as a remedial provision, and what is contained in the evangelical system of faith and practice. The sermon does not deny that the obligation of the Moral Law is recognised in the Gospel; but this very expression implies that the Law and Gospel are in their nature distinct. The container and the thing contained are not identical.

As we are now drawing towards the close of Dr. Fisk's connexion with the Wesleyan Academy, we shall add a few additional particulars illustrative of his demeanour in the station he occupied.

His devotion to the interests of the school was as unremitting as his sense of responsibility was profound. He left no expedient untried to improve the minds and morals of his charge. Learning that, in some houses where the scholars boarded, the rules of the school were held almost in abeyance, he addressed a circular letter to the keepers of the boarding-houses, explaining and enforcing the regulations of the school, and requiring them either to see them observed or to dismiss their boarders.

The subjoined letter will show the feelings with which he regarded a nuisance far too common at the seats of literary institutions.

“Wilbraham, April 2, 1830.

“DEAR SIR,

“I received a bill this morning against —— which gave me much pain. It would be incredible to me, if matter of fact did not confirm it beyond the possibility of a doubt, that respectable men in this town should encourage our scholars to run up such bills as this. If they wish to ruin the reputation of the school, and thereby drive all scholars from it, this is the way to do it. Notwithstanding all I have said to you, sir, and to other gentlemen on this subject, the same course is pursued quarter after quarter; and that it is pursued very extensively at your store, —— and others are lamentable examples. They have been called home for their profligacy; injured in their habits and morals (if not ruined); and carrying with them, and carrying in their own corrupted examples and characters, *blasting* testimonies against the repu-

tation of the institution. However little, sir, you and the good people of this place realize it, a few more such seasons as the last will ruin the school. I have published to the world, and proclaimed it upon the house-tops, that we had a moral and religious school; that there was little or no opportunity for the scholars to get corrupted. But, sir, how can I hold up my head, and face the fathers of those sons who came here moral and virtuous, but have been permitted, at the stores and taverns, by men who profess to be friends to the institution, and some of them friends to Christ, to run up bills for sweetmeats, wine, oyster-suppers, sundries (rum, I suppose), to the amount of from \$5 to \$100? And these very men, too, have been requested not to trust such boys even for *the necessities of life* without an order. Sir, I am ashamed and confounded before the public! I am disappointed in gentlemen who take this course! Sir, I never shall pay such bills, and the parents will never pay them if I can hinder it. If a love of *present gain* will lead men to suffer such bills on their backs, they may at least be restrained when they find those bills are uncollectable. I know, however, this will not wholly meet the evil. Men may, if they choose, take a course to induce scholars to sell their books and clothes, as some have done, to meet these debts of honour, as they are taught to consider them. But let me ask you, sir, as a Christian, is this religion? Is this doing as in similar circumstances we would have others do by *our children*? Is it befriending the institution? Permit me, dear sir, to deal plainly. I am not angry, but I am *afflicted and pained*. I did expect a different course from you, at least.

“What you mean by *sundries* I cannot tell; I say perhaps it is ardent spirits, for I have been informed you have said you *would* sell the scholars rum. Is this true? I have also been informed that some of our scholars would be in your store carrying on until ten o'clock, or perhaps eleven o'clock at night. Is this true? Sir, any explanation you can give me I shall be pleased to receive. I have written my feelings frankly. If I know my heart, I have no other motive but the good of the institution; and in this I did sup-

pose that the citizens here had a common interest. But if they have no greater interest than to indulge our scholars to the injury of their morals and the offence of their parents for the sake of a little paltry pelf, the sooner we know this the better.

Yours in sincerity,

“ W. FISK.

“ P.S.—Do not think, sir, I blame you only in this thing : others have done the same ; it has become a crying evil against the institution.”

An extract from a letter written to Mrs. Fisk since the death of her husband, by a lady who for some time was principal of the female department at Wilbraham, will show the estimation in which Dr. Fisk was held by those associated with him in the duties of every-day life :

“ Those who have enjoyed the privilege of his society in the private circle, and have seen all those lights and shades which so sweetly diversified his character unfolded in all their loveliest hues, peculiar to himself as a companion and friend, feel still more deeply his irreparable loss. Among these I have been peculiarly favoured by a kind Providence, which, by a train of circumstances, associated me with him as governess in the institution at Wilbraham, where he presided as principal, and laid the foundation of its fame and usefulness. I witnessed the care, anxiety, and deep solicitude which daily marked his steps. Often did he exclaim, ‘ I rise or fall with this institution ;’ being, from the humble opinion he had of his own abilities and wisdom in planning its operations, doubtful of its ultimate success. He bore all our burdens, and was consulted on every occasion. All matters were referred to him, moral, intellectual, or physical. No circumstance, however trifling it might appear, if connected with the interests of the institution, was beneath his notice. He would take a little boy who had transgressed the rules into a room by himself, and reason with him upon his conduct until he had melted him into tears of repentance.” * * * * *

During this, as, indeed, every period of Dr. Fisk’s life, his conversation was marked by piety. Not that he was in the

habit of delivering formal lectures in the social circle, nor did he ever practise to any extent the *monologue*. His conversation was always easy, familiar, and natural. The heavenward tendency of his spirit was observable in the views which he took of things, in his occasional remarks, and the readiness with which he would suggest topics of piety, or fall in with religious trains of thought suggested by others. On such occasions he often uttered sentiments replete with Christian edification. It is to be regretted that more of his observations have not been retained. We insert the following, not as the best specimens, but the only ones made at this period of his life which we have received.

Christian Watchfulness.—"I was once conversing with a pious female of the Friends' Society. She said that it appeared to her that Christians did not rightly understand the nature of Christian watchfulness. We are not to watch our feelings or the world, sinners, Satan, or temptations, but *we are to watch Christ.*" "Looking unto Jesus" is a precept of Divine authority.

Make a Christ of nothing but Christ.—"At a certain period in my experience, I was very much troubled in my mind respecting my feelings. I unbosomed my heart to the Rev. T. Merritt, who knows, I think, as much about the way of faith as any man I ever saw, and told him all my obstacles. 'I think,' he replied, 'that you make a Christ of your feelings. You do not expect that Christ will bless you unless you have a peculiar kind of feelings. But Christ does not bless because you have peculiar feelings, but because you believe in him. Make a Christ of nothing but Christ.'"

CHAPTER XII.

Wesleyan University.—Dr. Fisk elected President.—Letters.—Sermon on Predestination and Election.—Inaugural Address.—Occupations.—Letters.

THE cause of education in the Methodist Episcopal Church was now rapidly advancing. This, however, was not owing so much to any essential change of views, as many have supposed, as to a change of circumstances. The Methodists had become the most numerous body of Christians in the United States, and had greatly increased both in wealth and intelligence. As they became able to educate their children, they found the importance of having institutions of learning under their own control. Prior to this they had been satisfied to send their children to colleges under the influence of other denominations, and, as a natural consequence, many became alienated from the views of their parents. Besides, most of the colleges in the country were under the direction of some one denomination, and this secured to those churches who had most influence in this line, a control over public sentiment that was hardly compatible with the equal rights of the several churches. Inequality of condition often leads to an invasion of the equality of rights. Moreover, while we had no such institutions among ourselves, the importance of education was not likely to be so generally felt as it ought to be; while the possession of them would cause the subject to be brought frequently before the congregations, and the spirit of the enterprise would become more universally diffused. The result has fully equalled the expectations of the Church. Education is now appreciated, not only by those among us already educated, but is sought for with eagerness by those who had no early advantages. The progress of opinion necessary to effect any great enterprise is generally slow; but, nevertheless, it was steadily deepening and extending as Providence continued to indicate the path of duty.

We have seen that several public academies had already risen into being. These served to cherish the awakened desire for knowledge. Besides these, two colleges, as we have also seen, were established by our people in the Western country, namely, Augusta College in Kentucky, chartered in 1822,* and Madison College at Union Town, Fayette county, Pennsylvania, chartered in 1827.* From these, as well as from our more intelligent ministers and laymen, many articles on education had appeared in our leading papers, the effect of which was to awaken the attention of many to the subject. It was also favourable to this project that the agitating questions of ecclesiastical polity were now settled; and the Church, being prosperous within as well as without, had leisure to turn her attention to her own improvement in solid, intelligent, and influential piety.

In the above remarks I have said nothing of the unfortunate Cokesbury College at Abingdon, or the Washington College in Baltimore; because, though the example of our fathers was a strong expression of their sense of the value of education, yet the calamities of those institutions more than neutralized the force of that example, and, indeed, formed a strong obstacle to future efforts in the cause. The spirit, however, was now fairly up, and it would work its way.

In the year 1829, the New-York Annual Conference made its first movement towards the establishment of a college. The circumstances which immediately gave rise to this movement are not unworthy of notice. It happened at this time that the buildings erected for the Literary, Scientific, and Military Academy, under Captain Partridge, at Middletown, Connecticut, had become vacant. On a certain day, some of the trustees of these buildings being together, one of them expressed no little surprise at the energy and liberality exhibited by the members of the Methodist Church in Middletown, in the recent erection of a large and very commodious place of worship; hinting that he should not be surprised if, before long, they should think of establishing a college. To carry on the idea, another sportively added that they had buildings to dispose of, which might be had for five thousand dol-

* Christian Advocate and Journal.

lars. Upon what trivial things do important events often turn! This remark, made merely in badinage, was reported to the venerable Laban Clark, presiding elder of the New-Haven district, then in Middletown, who promptly sent word that he would accept the offer, and be responsible for the money. This led to the serious consideration of an arrangement, the result of which was, that at the ensuing session of the New-York Conference, the subject was submitted, with proposals in due form, from the trustees of the academy. The establishment of a college having been in contemplation for some time before among some of the leading members of the body, they were readily induced to appoint a committee for the prosecution of the business. This committee consisted of the Reverend Drs. Emory and Luckey, and the Reverend Heman Bangs. The New-England Conference* being invited to unite in the project, appointed the Reverend Messrs. T. Merritt, S. Martindale, and Dr. Fisk, to act in conjunction with the New-York committee.

The first act of the joint committee was to issue proposals, inviting the several towns within a specified region to compete for the location of the college by the offer of subscriptions. Troy, in New-York, and Bridgeport, in Connecticut, both made liberal proposals; but those from Middletown were now so modified as to leave no room for hesitancy as to which should be preferred. The trustees of the academy, with the consent of the stockholders, offered the entire property, valued at about thirty thousand dollars, to the Conference in fee simple, with the single condition that it should be sustained as a college or university, besides giving an additional local subscription of eighteen thousand dollars. In this way fifteen acres of land, large, commodious, and substantial buildings, with fixtures, and the nucleus of a library, were placed at once in their hands. The report of the committee in favour of Middletown was adopted at the next sessions of the Conferences, and the name of Wesleyan University agreed on. Permanent trustees for the management of the financial department were chosen; and, in order to

* A similar project had been talked of, I understand, but not acted on, in this Conference.

secure the influence of the Conferences, visitors, not exceeding the whole number of trustees, were to be appointed annually by the Conferences patronising the institution. New-Hampshire and Vermont Conference came immediately into the measure, and that of Troy and others united in it afterward. A charter was granted by the Legislature of Connecticut in 1831, ratifying this arrangement, with an additional provision for placing the institution, should it become desirable, under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The charter secures all the rights and immunities of a University.

It would scarcely be proper, in this place, to go any farther into detail upon this subject. We cannot, however, forbear saying, that it appears, from Dr. Fisk's papers, that two considerations, in addition to what we have already named, made him enter with great alacrity into the enterprise: one of these was a desire that in the contemplated institution some arrangement might be made for the benefit of the sons of his brethren in the ministry, few of whom, on account of the expense, could enjoy the advantages of a liberal education. The other was the necessity of some more efficient measures for the education of young men who might be called to the work of foreign missions; for it was evident that the regulations of the Church for the improvement of the domestic ministry must be very inadequate to the wants of the foreign work. We shall see in the sequel how this latter object was provided for. To accomplish the former, provision was made, by which the payment of one hundred dollars by any clergyman should secure the right of keeping a son, or the son of any clergyman, at the institution, free of charge for *tuition*, during the life of the subscriber or the minority of his sons.

On the 24th of August, 1830, at the first meeting of the Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors, Dr. Fisk was elected President of the Wesleyan University. At first, for various reasons, he hesitated about accepting the appointment, and was on the point of declining; but convinced at length that to accept it was his duty, he sent the following reply to the official notice of his election.

"To the Joint Board of Trustees and Visitors of the Wesleyan University, now in Session in Middletown, Conn.

"GENTLEMEN,

"With a high sense of the confidence reposed in me by a majority of your Board, in electing me president of your proposed University, I tender you my sincere and grateful acknowledgments. I have a deep conviction of my own inability to perform the important and responsible duties connected with this appointment. In accordance, however, with the judgment of my friends, and in reliance upon the cordial and united aid of the Board, and of the colleagues which have been or may be appointed, and especially in an humble reliance upon Almighty God, without whose assistance the most gifted labour in vain, I will engage to the extent of my ability in the service of the Board, in the discharge of the duties assigned me, so soon as I can, in honour and justice, disengage myself from my present relation to another institution.

W. FISK."

Arrangements were made at this meeting of the official board to organize a preparatory school, which was to commence in October ensuing, under the care of the Rev. William C. Larrabee, a graduate of Bowdoin College, Maine. Dr. Fisk, meanwhile, was to remain at Wilbraham until the following December.

We introduce some passages from his private correspondence belonging to this part of our subject's life. The first is a letter to his cousin, the Rev. Daniel Brayton, a member of the Genesee Conference.

"Wilbraham, Feb. 23, 1829.

"DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST AND KINSMAN IN THE FLESH :

"When I received your esteemed favour of July last, I thought I should have written to you long before this time ; but business, hurrying, pressing business, has prevented, and would now prevent, did I not crowd its claims aside to attend for a few moments to the pleasanter claims of friendship. My life is much unlike what it once was. Once I had leisure, and spent much time in cultivating the friend-

ships of life ; but now I have become almost a man of business. It is true, I generally preach on the Sabbath, and some week-lectures ; but my preaching seems frequently to myself like the running of a rusty saw. I never coveted this situation : to give myself wholly to the ministry was always more pleasant to me ; but Providence has thrown me here, and here, for the present, it seems to be duty to stay. Somebody must take care of our literary institutions, or we shall have none ; and whoever does it will find it no easy task, especially if he has to be teacher, beggar, builder, treasurer, secretary, steward, bookkeeper, proctor, preacher, &c., &c., all himself ; and perhaps I may as well be that man, so far as my abilities will permit, as any other. I know not, with all my exertions and the exertions of my fellow-labourers in this good work, that we shall make our institution flourish. We well know that, except the Lord build the city, they labour in vain who build it ; but hitherto the Lord hath helped us. Our plans have succeeded, and our exertions have been prospered beyond our expectations.

“ I hope you will not fail to write to me. Let my delay have no influence to retard your next letter. As for any difference between us, in *rising* high or *looking* high as to worldly eminence,* I hope you will neither name nor think of that, unless you think me ambitious of eminence, and if you do, chide and reprove me as such feelings deserve. If my heart ever aspire to greatness, it is contrary to my better teaching. By a deep view of my own heart, God has shown me, several years since, what a helpless, worthless thing I am. What have I that I have not received ? And so negligent have I been, I *have received* but little, and on that little I have improved less ; and these are not the effusions of a voluntary humility, they are the strong and constant convictions of my inmost soul. May God forgive me.”

To the same.

“ Wilbraham, Nov. 1, 1839.

“ WHEN your esteemed favour arrived in Wilbraham, I was absent on a long and pleasant journey, first to Boston,

* This refers to some expressions in one of his correspondent's letters.

next to Portsmouth to attend our Conference, and then through the easterly part of New-Hampshire, and through the sublime pass of the White Hills up to my native state and my paternal cottage. This was a relaxation that my debilitated system required, after incessant labour and intense application in my professional duties ; and especially was it necessary for Mrs. Fisk, who had for some time been in a feeble state of health. We enjoyed a pleasant visit at our father's, took our friends in Brattleborough on our route home, and finally arrived home past the middle of July. Since my return I have kept your letter safe in my apartment of unanswered letters. Full many a time have I shuffled over the packet to see which *must* be answered, and yours has always *come up*, and had its claims acknowledged and *postponed*, under the influence of that cruel maxim to which many are unwillingly subject, '*business before friends.*' But the time is come for you, my friend and brother, to have 'some fragment of time, which otherwise might be lost,' devoted to you. Indeed, I fear too many fragments of my time are lost. But what I most reflect upon is, that that portion of it which is employed, and diligently employed, is comparatively lost, for want of the holy unction that gives an unearthly energy to the mind and an uncommon efficiency and success to the labours of the deeply-devoted servants of God. Much, under God, is to be attributed, I know, to commanding talents judiciously employed ; but what a crowning energy there is in the language and labours of that man whose soul is fired at the altar of Heaven ! How that man preaches who feels the word of God 'like a fire in his bones,' and who 'longs to speak that he may be refreshed !' Of this feeling I have too little. Sometimes, in the midst of my other avocations, my mind becomes so barren that I seem to have none of the spirit of an ambassador of the skies ; and this often leads me to doubt whether, in the engrossing cares of the institution, I am in the way of my duty. I have one thing, however, to encourage me : most generally, when I attempt to speak, the Lord fills my heart and my mouth. O, who would not preach such a Gospel with such helps ? I would not exchange my commission to preach the Gospel for a throne."

To the Rev. Chauncey Richardson, East Cambridge.

"Wilbraham, April 28, 1830.

"I was gratified in receiving a letter from you, and, although I have very little time to write, as I am preparing to go to New-York, still I feel disposed to drop you a line, that you may know I am not inattentive altogether to the claims of friendship. It affords me pleasure to learn that you have some refreshing drops on that barren point. May a shower follow! I have no doubt a powerful reformation would do them good; but it would take a more powerful heat than that which melts the flint in their glass (works*) to melt down the motley mass of character in your charge, and purify them into the transparent medium of Gospel sincerity. But we need not despair; the Gospel has power in it. Have you done anything yet in the Temperance cause? Would it not be well to get some tracts on the subject, and circulate them among the people, and then preach them a tremendous sermon, and form a Temperance Society? This work *must* go on; and to this end we must all keep an eye."

The next is an answer to a letter which he received from a young gentleman of fine talents, a student at Harvard University, formerly one of his pupils at Wilbraham, and at the present time a highly respectable and useful minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The nature of the letter will appear from the answer.

"Wilbraham, August 29, 1830.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I rejoice greatly to learn that you have been enabled 'to make an unreserved dedication of all you have and are to God.' I cannot readily describe to you the feelings of my heart on receiving this joyful intelligence. I always felt a special interest in your welfare; but I began to fear that the world had so far ensnared your heart, and its prospects and allurements had so far engrossed your affections, that there was little hope of your breaking the fascinating spell, and of

* The word is illegible in the manuscript.

your deciding to live and die for God. But God be thanked that you have at length deliberately and decidedly formed the resolution, and that God has accepted the offering of your heart. I have only one remaining anxiety left respecting you, and that is, that you may persevere unto the end. I know the temptations you will have to meet. I know the peculiar inducements to vain conversation, to neglect of prayer, and to pride and ambition, which lie especially in the path of the scholar. But you have intimated several things in your letter which give me much encouragement in your case. You seem to be aware of your danger, and therefore you will be on your watch. Besides, you seem to attach yourself strongly and warmly to that church whose doctrine and discipline, in my opinion, are peculiarly calculated to help on the young Christian in his religious course. In addition, you seem desirous to be useful, and to devote your talents and acquirements to the service of the Church and of the world. And, finally, you have placed before you, as an example, the great and good Wesley. All these things strengthen my hopes concerning you. Maintaining this course, and pursuing these objects, you shall finally triumph, and gain the prize ; yea, will persuade others to pursue the same happy course. But let me say to you, the only way of safety and of usefulness is to keep at the foot of the cross, humble and devout. Keep your soul alive in the spirit of devotion, and all the rest will be well. The moment you feel your soul declining in spiritual life, go to your closet, and wrestle with God till you prevail. Beware of your *social feelings*. These, even in religious company, and in religious exercises and conversation, may be indulged too far. Here, perhaps oftener than anywhere else, the young Christian stumbles ; and those of your warm and social temperament are more exposed in this way than those of a different temperament.

“ My young friend, God has given you your portion of existence in a very interesting age of the world, and called you to his favour and service at a very interesting time of life. Never was there a time for such extensive and promising moral enterprise as the present ; and seldom has any young

man had better opportunities to prepare for this work than you have. The world is before you; the Church is before you; the favourable providences of God are with you. O! may you be a faithful soldier in this cause. The prospect before you is a glorious one! How many unfading laurels you may gather in this noble enterprise, this holy warfare! My life must soon decline, my physical energies are already impaired, and the intellectual, feeble at best, must soon wane; but thanks be to God that he is raising up young men for the work, who, I trust, with an untiring zeal, will take the field and fight the battles of the Lord."

To his Mother.

"Middletown, July 12, 1831.

"DEAR MOTHER,

"I have written to Mary and to father since I have received letters from them, and it has now been several months, I believe, since I have heard anything directly from Lyndon. I hope you are all well; but it would be pleasant to me to hear from you a little oftener. It is said children do not think of their parents, when absent, as often as parents do of them. This may be true; but I think of my parents often enough to wish to hear from them more frequently than I do. Indeed, I feel my affection for my family connexions strong and unalienable; and though called, as I suppose, by the providence of God, to spend my life mostly at a distance from them, still they have a warm place in my affections and unworthy prayers. Seeing, as I do, that you are beginning to feel the effects of age and infirmity, and that you are not only feeble in body, but frequently depressed in mind, I feel very solicitous to have the privilege of soothing the anxieties, and elevating the depressions of age. I have no doubt but that your pilgrimage will end in triumph; for doubtless the Lord, the righteous Judge, has in reserve for you an *incorruptible crown, an unfading inheritance*. But I would not like to have your declining sun obscured by any transient cloud of gloom. Your life of faith ought to be followed by an old age of comfort and joy, as well as by an eternity of triumph. I hope you have an increase of spirit-

pal animation since I last saw you. How do your domestic concerns prosper ? How is your health ? How is your faith in the promises ? These and many more questions I would ask if I were with you ; but I do not expect you will answer them by letter with your trembling hand. You might, however, get Mary, in connexion with some communication from herself, or father, when he writes, to say something on these subjects."

The Methodists have always been remarkable for carrying their labours into every place where they were needed, and where Providence seemed to present an open door. Where they have been received and treated with Christian courtesy by the other denominations, things have usually gone on in harmony ; but where they have met with repulses or improper treatment, it has not unfrequently resulted in the confusion of their opponents. In saying this, I do not mean to assert that the Methodists, under such treatment, have never acted injudiciously, but merely to state the fact that violent opposition to them has seldom been successful. Several illustrations of this occurred in the life of Dr. Fisk.

In the town of Greenwich, about twelve miles from Wilbraham, there had been Methodist preaching for some time, which produced considerable religious interest. They preached, of course, their own doctrine clearly and fully. This excited uneasiness among the Calvinistic portion of the population, who had a strong desire to keep the Methodists out of the place, and attempted it in various ways. The town was now divided into two parties, those who believed in election and predestination, and those who held with the Methodists. In this state of things, Dr. Fisk, who had preached there several times, was requested by some respectable gentlemen to preach on the contested points. In pursuance of this request, he delivered his celebrated discourse on predestination and election.

In a few days he received a most pressing invitation, signed by Laban Marcy, Esq., and others, requesting a copy for publication. This was the occasion of this sermon's going to press. It is asserted that many in the very large audience

who heard it preached were convinced by it of the errors of the predestinarian theory, and others have been convinced by reading it in print.

The time had now arrived when Dr. Fisk must take leave of his friends and pupils at Wilbraham. It was a season of deep interest and unfeigned sorrow, and strong were the expressions of affectionate regard for him, both in the academy and among the citizens.

On this occasion he delivered to the school a valedictory address, which was highly interesting, and creditable to all parties. But it would swell our volume too much to introduce more in this place than an extract, merely to exhibit his views and feelings on dissolving this interesting connexion. Towards the close of his address, the speaker proceeded :

“Five years of labour and anxiety have deeply enlisted and closely connected every feeling of my heart in its (the institution’s) behalf. Such have been the variety and extent of my labours, that, contrary to general experience with respect to past time, the period seems, upon the review, like half an age instead of *five years*. But in this retrospect I have nothing to regret with respect to my connexion with the school but my own imperfections and mistakes ; of these I have had an abundant share, and have needed the forbearance of the trustees and the charity of the public : aside from these, the review is, on the whole, pleasant.

“My experience has been profitable. I have had an opportunity of taking many interesting lessons in studying the unsophisticated character of childhood and youth ; I have become more interested in the improvement of the rising generation, and have gained a fixed purpose of devoting to this work, in connexion with my ministerial duties, the little I may have of talent or influence, and the remainder of a feeble constitution and short life.

“I had rather have my name embalmed in the memory and affections of the rising generation, than to gather military honours in the field of battle, or civic wreaths in the Senate House, or to have it emblazoned on the proudest escutcheons of this world’s glory. The triumphs of this day,

however subordinate and limited the field of operations may have been, surrounded as I am by a hundred and fifty youths, who have gathered around our literary standard, and with whom we associate on terms of reciprocal affection, are an ample compensation for all past labours and solitudes.

"I stand here this day, also, with the consciousness of having aimed to do my duty, both to the people of the place and to the school. I have coveted no man's gold or silver; I brought none here, I shall carry none away; nay, but ye bear me witness that I have been willing to spend and be spent for you. If I can carry away a clear conscience towards God and towards man, it is all I ask.

"If this were the last day I were to reside among you, I should not take a formal leave of the school or the people, for my connexion with them is not wholly broken off; both my affection and relation to the school will often call me here. And I still hope, under God, to contribute, as I am able, something still—even for years, if life should be spared—to the aid of this institution."

The following extract will give a general view of the results of this school. We believe its subsequent history has corresponded in a good degree with these early indications:

"At the opening of this school we had seven scholars, since which time we have entered upon our books one thousand one hundred and fifty different scholars. Of these about thirty have entered the sacred ministry, a number are pursuing the study of law or physic, from twenty to thirty are now pursuing a college course, and from a hundred and thirty to a hundred and fifty have gone out of our seminary at different times as teachers.

"We have had the satisfaction of keeping many of our scholars several years, and many, very many, have returned to us from their different occupations a part of the season, year after year, to pursue their education. Our number has gradually increased up to the present term, and the advantages of the school have also increased."

In the month of December our subject took up his residence in Middletown, leaving his family, however, in Wilbraham until the ensuing spring. Some passages from a

letter to his cousin at Brattleborough about this period will be read with interest.

"Middletown, December 31, 1830.

"I am once more in college. I entered on the 18th instant, after having been a graduate fifteen years and four months. I have my room, bed, table, chair, &c., as formerly, and here I spend my days and nights, and enjoy a solitude and leisure from perplexing care and toil, to which, for these six years past, I have been an entire stranger. For certain reasons, it was not thought advisable for my family to remove here this winter; they remain at Wilbraham, therefore, until spring. In the mean time, my retirement is to be short. I expect to start to-morrow for Wilbraham, to make a short visit to my family preparatory to an excursion to New-York on my old business—begging; after which I shall probably visit Boston, and perhaps New-Bedford and Providence. For this winter campaign I enjoy a good degree of health and strength, through the goodness of God; and as much courage as strength. With the favour of Divine Providence, I expect we shall succeed; at any rate, we shall *try*. But I will not trouble you with a long story on this subject. My friends, I suppose, are not as much interested in my hobbies as I am; but I thought they might wish to know where I am and what I am doing. * *

"The clock reminds me that in about four hours more the year 1830 will close. It has gone with the years beyond the flood; gone, with all its records of character and conduct *for* and *against* us. There are a thousand commonplace sayings concerning the lapse of time which men are accustomed to use at this annual period, but none of them seem to have much effect upon us when made in the way of general remark. But who can sit down and call himself to a strict account, personally and conscientiously, without trembling before God, and confessing in sackcloth and ashes? Alas! how little have I done for God compared with what he has done for me! How little for the Church and the world! This seems to me to be a time for great exertion. Who has girded himself for the battle as he ought? If ever

it was pre-eminently criminal for the people of God to sleep upon their posts, I believe it is now. The signs of the times portend that the shaking of the nations is at hand. What commotions in Europe! Who that sees the mustering of armies, the furbishing of arms, the note of busy preparation for the work of death, but must groan in spirit, and pray for an arrest of judgment, and a staying of the fury of the Lord! Before the next year closes, according to present appearances, what multitudes of mothers will be left widows and childless! What rivers of blood will be shed! What groans will be uttered in the field of battle! and, above all, what multitudes of souls, unwashed and unforgiven, will be hurried into eternity! O, my God, my heart sickens at the sight! But faith looks through those scenes of blood, and this murky, humid atmosphere, saturated with the bloody vapour that rolls up from the heaps of the slain, and sees that when a third part of the men are slain, and the nations are convulsed and overthrown, 'the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall endure forever.' May he hasten it in his own time."

After the above-mentioned visit to Wilbraham, having returned as far as Middletown on his way to New-York to raise funds for the University, he wrote to Mrs. Fisk as follows:

"Middletown, January 14, 1831.

"When I parted with you, I thought I should not write until I arrived at New-York; but, for various reasons, I have deferred my journey until to-day, and shall go on to New-Haven to spend the Sabbath, and not reach New-York till next week. I therefore drop you a line to let you know of my safe arrival, comfortable health, &c. I had a time of it getting over the river the morning I left Springfield, being under the necessity of travelling two or three miles on foot, and carrying my valise, and a part of the way on fences and lopped trees, to get over the meadows which were overflowed. However, I arrived safe, and attended the Quarterly Meeting; rode into Hartford, and preached on Sabbath evening,

and on Monday arrived here. I have been troubled somewhat with a cold. The weather is extremely cold; the nights long and rather tedious, as I feel little inclined to sleep; and the regions of frost seem all around me and almost touching me, though I make out to keep tolerably comfortable.

“What success I shall have in New-York is very problematical; but I must go and do what I can. My stay there will depend on circumstances; but I will advertise you from time to time of my operations. I rather dread engaging in these conflicts with selfishness and covetousness; but, when I get well engaged, I can drive on with pretty good courage. I sometimes ask myself, Am I never to have done with these new enterprises? To be always pushing up hill is hard work, but I suppose I must tug on. Perhaps, if I have any appropriate place in the army of the faithful, it is that of a pioneer. This is not the easiest department, but still I like it, because it has so much of chivalry in it, and keeps the mind so much awake to its duties. What a dull world this would have been if our Creator had left everything prepared and planned to our hands! I am glad he did not do it. It was enough that he furnished materials, and tools, and a mind, and commanded us to invent, and plan, and fashion, and execute, according to our several ability. O, there is an interest in this course, which wakes up the soul, and calls out the energies of the intellect, and makes man feel that he does not live in vain. I wonder if heaven will not be a place of enterprise! Or shall we be so ‘satisfied when we wake up in his likeness,’ and ‘see as we are seen,’ and ‘know as we are known,’ that this prying, and toiling, and enterprising spirit will then be at rest, or be excited and exercised only with joyous wonder and ecstatic praise? Probably the latter will be the true state of the glorified saints, but never before. At any rate, my dear R., may we so perform our part here as finally to know by experience in what heaven consists.”

On the 21st day of September, 1831, the halls of the University were thrown open for the reception of students, and the occasion was celebrated by appropriate literary ceremonies. After prayer by the president, a salutatory address in

Latin, and a poem and oration in English, were delivered by three of the students, after which Dr. Fisk delivered his inaugural address. This able production was listened to with profound attention by the friends of education, while it fully sustained the reputation of its author. Many flattering testimonies of approbation were received, some of them from persons of distinction, expressed in the warmest terms. It was immediately published in pamphlet form, and in the leading periodicals of the Church, and was soon circulated throughout the Union. The consequence was, the immediate elevation of the institution over which the author presided to a commanding position before the public; and many sought to place themselves under a mind so sound and vigorous, so pure and elevated, so richly fraught with the moral and mental endowments requisite to the responsible station which he occupied.

From the remarks in this address on the study of ancient languages, some have drawn the conclusion that the author did not properly appreciate their value. But this is unwarranted. It never was his intention to reduce the requisitions for a diploma below those of the most respectable institutions in the country. But there were many young men in the Methodist community of superior talents, who, though they had passed the period of life when the ancient languages could be pursued to greatest advantage, might nevertheless attain to very respectable proficiency in science and English literature. To encourage this class to pursue such studies as were adapted to their years, was his object in these remarks, and hence, also, he admitted, in his system, the "partial course," made up entirely of the English branches. Such students, however, received, instead of a regular collegiate degree, a certificate, or modified diploma, testifying their attainments in the several branches they had studied.

On the study of the ancient languages he never went so far as Dr. Rush, who thought the time spent in them almost lost; and for the views which he did entertain he was sustained by very respectable modern authorities. The same views were advanced at the New-York Literary Convention elsewhere spoken of, especially by Professor Vethake and

Mr. Gallaudet. In support of them, the example of the Polytechnic School in Paris was adduced, together with an institution of a high order at Berlin, in Prussia.

Dr. Fisk's views of the classification of students differed from those which generally prevailed. In the Wesleyan University, the students were arranged, not in classes, according to the length of standing, but in sections, according to their advancement. The diploma was to be received whenever the candidate was prepared for it, without regard to the time spent at college. His views upon this subject were not adopted hastily, nor without suitable consultation. Besides others, he received letters on the subject from Dr. Olin, Professor (now President) Durbin, who were enrolled in the Faculty of the University, though they subsequently resigned; from the able president of Brown University, and from President Marsh, of the University of Vermont. In the last-named institution, the plan was already in successful operation, though it has been since abandoned. In the Wesleyan University, the ancient names of the classes have been restored, without materially deviating from the new principle. The student enters any class for which he is prepared, takes as many studies as he has ability successfully to carry on, and receives his degree whenever he has accomplished the entire collegiate course, be it sooner or later. But by far the greater number go regularly through, as in other colleges; a course always recommended when no serious obstacles exist.

In the month of October in the preceding year (1830), at a convention of literary and scientific gentlemen held in the City of New-York, these views were very clearly and forcibly advanced. They were the subject of an able and interesting communication from Professor Vethake, presented to the Convention and read by the Reverend Dr. Wainwright. Whether Dr. Fisk was aware of this fact, I cannot say. Probably he was not, as he was not at the Convention, and the Journal of the Convention was not printed until 1831, most likely after the inaugural address was composed. Yet the views were entirely his own, both in regard to the points already named, and the distribution of college honours.

These he thought decidedly objectionable, often unjust, and therefore injurious, and always creating an unwholesome moral influence by presenting improper motives to exertion. Even the assignment of the parts at the public exhibitions were distributed on the ground of general expediency rather than on that of scholarship. If it be objected that this diminishes the stimulus of emulation, we might answer that it still leaves ample room for as much as is virtuous and healthful, and more than this is pernicious.

It was Dr. Fisk's wish to have had one year allowed him for the purpose of raising funds to place the institution on a liberal and permanent foundation ; but this was overruled. Nevertheless, he made great personal exertions to assist the agents of the Conferences in this business. It is matter of regret, that one whose talents should have been employed in a sphere so much more elevated, was obliged to spend so much time in a work that might have been accomplished by a much lower amount of talent and learning ; but, in the infancy of the cause, it was absolutely necessary to the success of the undertaking, and Dr. Fisk never, from personal considerations, declined labour in any department, however humble, when he thought his efforts were really demanded. He also desired to send to Europe for philosophical apparatus, and arrangements were made for this purpose ; but, for some reason, the project was abandoned.

Dr. Fisk was now fully inducted into his new office, and found himself involved in as much business as ever. His hands, and head, and heart were completely occupied. He was again the principal of a new institution, where the foundation had to be laid and the superstructure reared. In such a situation, one with his peculiar disposition would necessarily find ample occupation. All called upon him for advice or other aid, and his supervision extended everywhere. He draughted rules for the University, and framed the regulations of the boarding department ; he superintended the studies in the college, and the pecuniary arrangements of the Prudential Committee ; he heard classes recite in Greek, Latin, and Metaphysics, and listened to the petty details of the students' personal concerns ; and while he aided the pro-

fessors in the higher regions of mind, he often came down to the examination of the accounts of the institution in dollars and cents. He was remarkably fitted for this multiplicity of business by his peculiar tact in management, his readiness and flexibility of mind, his knowledge of men, habits of order, and facility in executing his plans. He was never embarrassed, never out of temper. Always calm, even in the midst of tumult, he never lost the control of his faculties. An influential business man of liberal education, responsible civil office, and a member of the Prudential Committee, remarked to me that he had seldom been more surprised than at the first meetings which he attended with Dr. Fisk. He exhibited such knowledge of affairs, such fertility of mind, skill, and address in transacting business, as very soon convinced him that they had no ordinary man to deal with. Skill in securing co-operation in his plans was one of his peculiar qualifications. All had confidence in his judgment, and in most things readily yielded to his views. His own mind seemed the centre of light and influence, and its radiations illumined all who were about him.

An extract from a letter to his cousin at Brattleborough is in keeping with his character. It is a pleasing specimen of his mind, exhibiting alike that vein of pleasantry which often marked his intercourse with his intimate friends, and his devotion to the best interests of the world.

“Middletown, Sept. 29, 1831.

“In looking over my unanswered letters, I find I have been in debt to you and your dear mother ever since last May. As you know something of my situation, however, I doubt not but you will excuse the delay, without requiring me to plead specifically and in detail in my own defence. Suffice it to say that, in changing my situation from Wilbraham to this place, I took a second office before I had given up the first, which threw upon me a double duty, divided by a distance of 45 miles, and each part increased by peculiar circumstances. I am now, however, somewhat relieved. Rev. Wm. M. Bangs, son of Rev. Dr. Bangs of New-York, has been appointed my successor at Wilbraham, and our new

institution has at length struggled her way into being. She is a promising daughter nine days old, and, though so young, already appears quite womanly, and, in the opinion of her *parents* at least, quite interesting and hopeful. If we can give her a good training and a proper direction, we are confident she will in her turn become the *Alma Mater* of many interesting sons, who will rise up and call her blessed, and will go forth from her tuition to bless the world. Forty-five promising youths have already joined her family and solicited her patronage. We are hoping they will not be trained to selfishness, to be emulous of earthly honour, and covetous of earthly gain; but will be such as the present circumstances of the world require, men of enlarged philanthropy, of godlike benevolence, who shall go forth in the great work of conquering the world for Christ. If I thought this would not be the result, I would now quit my station and take the field, and sell my life as dearly as possible to the common enemy. I can hardly restrain myself as it is. It looks so blessed to be engaged directly in the work of saving souls, especially at this season of general revival, that I hardly know how to confine myself within these stone walls. O, what an eventful day is this! Is God gathering in his elect preparatory to those judgments which will sweep away the incorrigibly impenitent? Is he 'yet once more shaking the heavens and the earth,' that 'those things which are shaken' may be removed, and that 'those things which cannot be shaken may remain?' At any rate, my dear friend, 'let us, receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, have grace to serve God acceptably, with reverence and godly fear,' and let us do what we can to get others on the same immovable foundation."

The following note, accompanying the copy of an original letter from Dr. Fisk, is from one of the doctor's early pupils. The note shows the occasion on which the letter was written, and at the same time exhibits the feelings of the writer towards his instructor :

"DEAR SIR,

"I have just read a note from you, soliciting letters, &c., written by the late Dr. Fisk. Though very unworthy, it has been my happiness to enjoy the confidence and regard of Dr. Fisk for the last ten years. Were he now on the shores of mortality, I could not repay to him the kindness and instruction I have received. Under God, he was the means of my awakening and conversion at Wilbraham, and every important step I have taken since that period has been with his counsel and advice. While in college I was accustomed to lay before him my peculiar feelings, and the following letter was received in answer to some of my inquiries :

"Weeleyan University, October 28, 1831.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"In reply to your inquiries, I have only time for a few thoughts. Your state of feeling is, on the whole, encouraging. I should judge the good Spirit was leading you on to know more perfectly the deep things of the kingdom; and, though this may be done in a way different from what you might desire, it is no uncommon way, nor yet is it unprofitable. The Lord's way is always the best, and we may know that we are led in this way whenever we give ourselves up to him, and contend for no will of our own. What more can we do? But we do not give ourselves up to him when we are dissatisfied with our exercises. Indeed, we should be dissatisfied when we live in known sin, or are destitute of the witness of the Spirit; but when we are living for God, and have the witness that we are his, we may safely leave the rest at his disposal, without fear or solicitude. In this frame of mind, conviction for sanctification is not "a sense of condemnation," nor is it, perhaps, merely "a sense of the importance of the blessing." It is the longing of the soul for the Divine *fulness*, because the *taste* it has only sharpens up the soul for more of this divine enjoyment; and it is the loathing of sin, because the soul has a clear view of the odious character of sin, contrasted with the beauty of holiness and the purity of the Divine law. If at any time

sin gets the victory over us, then we feel a *conviction* for *justification*. But this is often accompanied with a conviction for sanctification of a deep and painful character ; and for this obvious reason, that the soul is now convinced, by painful experience, of the *power* of indwelling sin, and of the constant danger it is in of being overcome when this enemy is lurking within. If you "know that there are corruptions in your heart," watch them closely, or they will give you too much *feeling* ; and if you keep them under, God will take care of the rest. Faith, it is true, *will not take hold* of Christ beyond our conviction of our wants. This I hold to be an axiom in Christian experience, but to the faithful soul God will give this conviction as he sees it is needed. You need never fear to *enjoy* "small blessings" as you go along : many get discouraged by a mistake here. If Saul's army had eaten freely as they fought, the conquest over their enemies would have been greater. Our heavenly Father drops honey around us that we may eat. He has never called us to go to war *faint with fasting*. "*Eat, drink, O beloved : let thy soul delight itself in fatness.*" It is by this spiritual nourishment that the soul *grows* up into Christ. If these blessings "set your teeth on edge," it may be for the reason that God cursed the children of Israel after answering their prayer, while yet the meat was *between their teeth*, because they were dissatisfied with his dealings with them.

"With respect to your question whether there are any lawful gratifications of self, the terms of the question are so indefinite I should not know how to answer it. If you mean *self* as distinct from the will of God and the good of the world, I should say *no*. But there are gratifications which have an indirect bearing upon the social and divine duties, and may therefore be lawful to a certain extent : such as certain bodily exercises, and mental recreations, and temperate indulgence of the appetite, all of which are not direct acts of duty to God or man, and yet may be useful. But as some of these, if indulged in too frequently, would damp devotion, and thus we should lose more in soul than we should gain in body or intellect, therefore it may be lawful to indulge in them *occasionally*, and yet not *habitually*. The

same may be said, perhaps, of certain condescensions to the habits of society, which may seem a needless tax upon time, but which may be requisite "to gain the more." But in all these things wisdom is profitable to direct, and he whose spiritual "taste can discern perverse things," will soon learn what food is injurious to his spiritual constitution.' "

Aptness at illustration was a peculiar quality of Dr. Fisk's mind, which added not a little to the interest and utility both of his preaching and conversation. An incident illustrating this trait may be inserted here : Mrs. Fisk had been for some time in a rather desponding, doubting state in regard to her spiritual interests. Riding out one day with a very gay horse, as they were about leaving some friends on whom they had called, the ladies exclaimed, "Mrs. Fisk, are you not afraid to ride with that horse?" "O, not at all afraid," was the reply; "why should I be afraid? Do I not know who holds the reins?" "My dear wife," said the doctor, on driving off, "do you know how beautifully you have explained faith? Only put the same simple confidence in the Saviour that you do in me, and you will know who holds the reins there." It was a word in season.

To the Rev. Daniel Brayton.

"Middletown, December 14, 1831.

"I write from a sick room. Almost a fortnight I have been confined with an attack upon my lungs, accompanied by fever. I am now better, through mercy, so as to be able to leave my room. Mrs. Fisk has also been quite ill, but she is improving. My greatest fear is that I shall not profit by my affliction as I should. I need the rod; and the more my worldly cares and responsibilities multiply upon me, the more I find myself in danger of being absorbed therein. By this means my mind becomes barren, and my spiritual fervour is cooled. I am alarmed at such symptoms; for, after all, what is to be compared with communion with God! I know the leading motive of my heart is to fight sin and Satan, and, in connexion with the Church, to achieve some decisive victory over 'the god of this world,' and 'spiritual

wickedness in high places ;' but I am also aware that much of unsanctified ambition may be enlisted even in this work. I hope, however, to be directed aright, in motive as well as in act. There is certainly much to be done. When I look around upon the world, and see it lying in the wicked one, I feel such an ardour burning within me as I cannot describe ; I want to be divided into a thousand parts, and have a thousand fold efficiency given to each. My dear brother, is not the Christian world asleep ? What unparalleled stupidity ! Would to God we had some electrifying instrument that would draw from heaven a portion of that celestial fluid that fires the breasts of angels, and shocks simultaneously the whole heavenly host ! With such an instrument, and a conductor that would extend over the Church, some holy zeal might be communicated to the Church militant. Where is another Franklin that will draw down this spiritual fire ? Whose faith will pierce the clouds to draw it down ? and who will join hand in hand to share in the shock ? O, my brother, let us rally a company, and go to work as if we felt, what is indeed the fact, that a world is at stake !" The remainder of the letter is torn off.

It was during the above-mentioned sickness that Dr. Fisk wrote his stirring address to the Methodist Church on Temperance. His mind, in the quiet and seclusion of a sick chamber, had leisure to look abroad upon the condition of the world, and he became so much affected, and so strongly desirous of contributing towards its melioration, that, calling for pencil and paper, with his hat or a book for a desk, propped up on one side with pillows, for he could not even sit erect, he commenced this powerful appeal. His physician, finding him thus employed, said to him, " I believe I must deny you the use of your pencil."

" I will put it up," was the calm reply, " if you say so, doctor ; but I have an important subject—it is Temperance ; and I think it will help your medicine."

However, on the doctor's reiteration of his fears, he intermitted his work for a day or two, but completed it during his convalescence.

This tract differs considerably from the author's usually calm and subdued style. It is ardent and vigorous, amounting almost to the vehement. It was intended only for the *Christian Advocate and Journal*; but so effective and appropriate was it considered, that it was stereotyped, and published as a tract by the Book Concern, and has received a most extensive circulation.

It was with difficulty Dr. Fisk could reconcile himself to inactivity when he saw so much to be done around him. During his convalescence, he one day remarked to Dr. Woodward,* "I have just been saying to Mrs. Fisk that she enjoys my sickness, because she can keep me here. But I shall get you, doctor, to intercede for me."

"I believe," was the reply, "I shall take Mrs. Fisk's part; for I should hardly have known you but for this sickness. And how much I should have lost! though perhaps some of my patients may complain of my long visits here. But I do fear that you are too anxious to be at your work; and I shall commission Mrs. Fisk to keep you here as long as she can."

During this year, a paragraph published by Dr. Fisk in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, designed to excite interest in behalf of the Library of the Wesleyan University, attracted, through the Rev. Jefferson Lewis, then stationed on Camden Circuit, the attention of Thomas Chapman, Esq., of Woodbury, New-Jersey. This gentleman had collected a library valued at about seven thousand dollars. He ultimately concluded to transfer to the Wesleyan University about two thousand volumes of standard works, many of them scarce and valuable, between two and three hundred of which were in folio or quarto, on terms so favourable that there was no hesitation about complying with them. They now form the Chapman Library of the Wesleyan University. It is deposited in alcoves, with space reserved for additions,

* Dr. Henry Woodward, a gentleman of great worth, as well morally and intellectually as professionally. Dr. Fisk considered his skill the means of saving his life. He ever took pleasure in cultivating the friendship now formed between them. Dr. W. died a few years subsequently; and Dr. Fisk in his last illness having made an allusion to him, added, "O, I shall soon see him!"

as the liberal benefactor expressly desired the privilege of making subsequent additions to it.

No man could form any conception of Dr. Fisk's labours and activity of mind without a minute account of every day's occupations. And yet the greater part of these, however important and useful, were such as could not with propriety be inserted in a memoir. Certainly no man ever lived less for himself. The frequent and often protracted journeys that he took, invariably connected with some public end ; his sermons at home and abroad ; public addresses on a great variety of topics, together with his writings and the uninterrupted care of his presidency, so completely engrossed his time, that Mrs. Fisk said she had less of his society after he became connected with the University than while he was presiding elder of a district. Even his correspondence was itself no little burden. His easy, accessible manners brought him into contact with so many persons who thought they had claims upon him, as laid no small tax upon his time, and strength, and patience too, had this been an exhaustible element. A great part of his letters were, indeed, on the business of the school or the University ; but he had a goodly number besides these, and some of them curious enough : for instance, one from some young persons, requesting him to establish preaching in a factory ; another from some philosophers in Boston, containing nice mathematical calculations to prove that they had solved that insolvable problem, the quadrature of the circle, and proposing that he should go to Europe to astonish her *savans* with the discovery : one was from a stranger to him, complimenting him on his inaugural address, and trying to prove that they two were the only men in the country who knew anything ; and, after inflicting a letter upon him of appalling length, requesting him to revise it and send it to press ! Many of his letters are from young men asking advice upon their conduct in life, and some even in relation to their matrimonial affairs. This is only a slight specimen, but it must suffice.

CHAPTER XIII.

Predestination and Election.—General Conference of 1833.—Incident.—Literary Convention.—Study of the Bible in Colleges.—Letter from Rev. Richard Watson.—Honours Conferred.—Correspondence.—Ecclesiastical Union.—Address on Temperance.

DR. FISK'S sermon on Predestination had now gained extensive notoriety. Numerous testimonies to its value reached him from different parts of the country, while the demand for it had already produced the third edition, and it was, moreover, about to be stereotyped, and issued from the Book Room as a tract. But he had to pay the penalty of pleasing the believers in his doctrine by displeasing their opponents. Had this been confined to strangers, the trial would have been less painful; but he had many very dear friends among the Predestinarian school, and a severe letter from one of these drew from him, in reply, an exposition of his views and motives as follows :

"Middletown, March 19, 1833.

"MY DEAR —,

"The perusal of your letter gave me much pain; as much, probably, as my sermon gave you. It afflicted me to think I had grieved my kind —, and, probably, the other friends of the family; and it afflicted me more especially to be suspected of injuring the cause of God; of making Christians mourn, and infidels rejoice; of wielding carnal weapons, &c. I have reviewed my sermon, and re-examined my motives; but either from blindness, or from a consciousness of my integrity, I am not convinced of the truth of the charges, nor can I with my present light plead guilty. As you do not specify the points in which I have erred, I cannot, of course, know where the offence is: it is not, you say, that I differ from you, but it is in the manner of doing it. In my arguments I have endeavoured to be candid; I thought I was. It is true, I have tried to make it appear from the Calvinistic

premises that certain logical consequences would of necessity follow, but I have not said the Calvinists either acknowledged or believed these consequences; and here is the controversy between us: we infer what they deny. Look, my dear —, again, and see whether I do not charge these consequences upon the doctrine, and not upon the persons who hold it; and if I argue upon this subject at all, I must present these consequences, and that, too, in a strong light, if I am able to do so. As it respects Universalists finding ‘support for their doctrine’ from the sermon, this surprises me. You know, dear —, and we all know, that Universalism is founded on Predestination: take that away, and Universalism is dead, of course. If Predestinarians insist upon their doctrine, and thereby strengthen the Universalist *foundation*, this is not my fault; and if real Christians mourn because they cannot hold up Predestination without seeming, according to the showing of the sermon, to encourage Universalism, neither is this my fault. The joy of the one and the sorrow of the other do not prove the sermon wrong, but only show the connexion between the two doctrines, for which the sermon is not accountable, since it is an undeniable fact that I could not preach successfully against Universalism without opposing Predestination. At least these are my views; and, believing thus, shall I refrain to probe the error to the bottom because of the tender feelings of some, whose systems may be affected thereby? I can do anything to save the feelings and affections of my friends except to keep back what I conceive to be God’s truth.

“But the part of my sermon which has given most offence is that in which a changing of the argument, and an apparent want of openness and sincerity, are attributed to the Calvinists: this you probably had in view in your letter. When a late writer in the Connecticut Observer attacked me on that point, I replied to him that if he would give his name, and come out openly, and deny any or all of that paragraph, I pledged myself to prove it by facts, or make my public acknowledgment. Neither he nor any other person has presumed to do it. I believe them all to be truths, and truths, too, very capable of proof. I may have made the charge

too general; but it is a very common policy. It should be corrected; it is not done in a corner; it is public; and there is no other way but to give it public reproof. I trust it was in the spirit of love that I did it. And do I love my brother the less because I will not suffer sin upon him?

“With respect to the circumstances that called forth the sermon, I could say many things; but no circumstances would justify me in doing wrong, or in wielding unscriptural weapons. The sermon was preached, it is true, where many things were done as they ought not to be done; but on this point I will add nothing. I want to say much more, but my sheet is full. What I may have lost in your confidence, I hope I may gain in your prayers. Mine and R.’s love to yourself, and to —, and —, and all other friends—by no means forgetting L—.

“With *undiminished confidence* and affection, your unworthy
W. FISK.”

This letter brought a reply, couched in terms of great affection and respect, and full of acknowledgments and apologies for the injustice which had been done him. The affair passed off ultimately without any disturbance of the affection which had existed between the parties, and probably, on both sides, with an increased conviction that Christians of opposite opinions can “agree to differ.”

Dr. Fisk was a member of the General Conference which met this year (1832) in Philadelphia. While there, he was, as usual, full of various and important business. Being a member of the committee on education, of which the lamented Dr. Emory, at the same Conference elected bishop, was chairman, he wrote the report on that branch of the work.

He had also been appointed at the New-England Conference of 1831, together with the Rev. Messrs. Scott and Hyde, to “draught a respectful petition to the next General Conference (i. e., 1832) to be holden in Philadelphia, setting forth the difficulties to which the cause of God and Methodism is subjected in this part of the work, in consequence of the provisions of Discipline restraining our people from build-

ing churches with pews, and praying that the Discipline may be so altered as to take off those restrictions, and leave our people at liberty to consult circumstances and the necessities of the community in respect to the manner of building churches in different parts of the work." The writing of this document devolved upon our subject, and so did its presentation to the body to which it was addressed. This was a very delicate and exciting topic; the New-England Conferences, from the peculiar state of the community, being as much in favour of pews as the Southern and Western Conferences are against them. The former, indeed, had several years since been obliged to adopt the practice of pewing their churches. Much warm debate was consequently anticipated. Hence, as, no doubt, many will remember, when the subject was once called up, the apostolic M'Kendree, then in the chair, raised his feeble hands, and in his gentle manner, with a tremulous voice, observed, "Now, brethren, the Pew Question is coming up: watch and pray, brethren." The admonition was not lost upon the Conference. Though there was much debate, there was, generally speaking, a good spirit prevailing. In one or two instances only was this departed from; and as Dr. Fisk was necessarily prominent in the business, he came in for his full share of animadversion: yet he never lost his self-command. Once only we recollect, when a younger member of the body dealt out some rather irritating personalities, we saw a sudden movement of the head, as though about to reply; but, instantly checking himself, he resumed his habitually dignified and placid manner. His calm dignity and the meekness of his demeanour commanded the admiration of all, while the arguments he advanced, as appears from his subsequent correspondence, convinced some of the justice of his cause, who, at the opening of the debate, were entirely prejudiced against it.

These circumstances led to one of his many beautiful and edifying observations. A lady who was present and saw the whole scene, on his return from the Conference expressed her surprise at his self-control, and inquired,

"Have you no feeling, doctor?"

"Yes, madam," was the reply; "I have too much."

"Then, sir, how did you command yourself? Will you please to give me a lesson?"

"I can only point you," was his answer, "I can only point you to my Master, and regret that I follow him at so great a distance."

Could any response have indicated greater dignity, modesty, and Christian simplicity?

It was at this period that the writer of this memoir may be said to have formed his first real acquaintance with him from personal observation; and well he remembers how forcibly he was struck with the lovely features of his character. Energetic, yet gentle; kind, but faithful; gifted, but unassuming; and popular, yet humble and retiring, no wonder that he was admired by all who knew him. A slight specimen of his spirit and manners will exemplify some of these virtues. We remember that when a delegate, who was asked when he reached the city, replied, "On Sabbath morning," how gently and delicately Dr. Fisk turned to him and remarked, "Why, you broke the good day, brother," drawing out the explanation that the steamboat had been accidentally delayed. And upon another occasion, when a lady, staying at the same house, lamented to him her loss, through feeble health, of the opportunity of hearing the preaching, he remarked, with his peculiar simplicity, "Then I think I must give you a sermon all to yourself, in the parlour, to help to make up your loss." Whether his many engagements permitted it, I did not ascertain. Need I apologize for introducing such trivial incidents? I trust not. Those who like to mark the nicer shades of character will appreciate their value.

While he was thus, by his gentler virtues, the favourite of the social circle, he possessed those more commanding qualities that gain public confidence and respect. Nor was his influence confined to a small portion of society; it pervaded the mass. A rather striking proof of this occurred during his journey to the General Conference. When on board a crowded steamboat, the clerk announced that Dr. Fisk would perform religious service before retiring for the

night, and that those who did not choose to participate might withdraw to the forward cabin ; but one only retired ; and all the rest, with but few exceptions, after joining in a song of praise, bowed together before the throne of grace, while commended by Dr. Fisk to the protection of Heaven. But such instances were by no means rare. He frequently had evening prayers when travelling by steamboat. This reminds one of the incident between the late Dr. Livingston and the Count Surveilliers, mentioned in Dr. Gunn's life of the former.*

Dr. Fisk about this time was engaged in an interesting discussion on the introduction of the Bible as a text-book, or classic, into our institutions of learning. This subject had been proposed at the Literary Convention in New-York in 1830, and the Reverend W. C. Woodbridge, Reverend E. Robinson, and Reverend T. H. Gallaudet were appointed a committee to consider the subject, and report upon it at the next Convention. These gentlemen addressed a circular to several distinguished persons, of whom Dr. Fisk was one, requesting their views. To this paper he returned an answer arguing in favour of its introduction.

The following paper shows the action of the Convention at its next meeting in 1831 :

"New-York, November 5, 1831.

"SIR,

"At a recent meeting of the Literary Convention in this city, a report was presented by a committee appointed by the

* It is thus related : "The doctor and the ex-king of * * * * happened once to be fellow-passengers, with many others, on board one of the North River steamboats. As the doctor was early in the morning walking the deck, and gazing at the refulgence of the rising sun, which appeared to him unusually attractive, he passed near the distinguished stranger, and stopping for a moment, accosted him thus : 'How glorious, sir, is that object !' pointing gracefully with his hand to the sun. The stranger assenting, he immediately added, 'And how much more glorious, sir, must be its Maker !' A gentleman who overheard this short incidental conversation, being acquainted with both personages, now introduced them to each other, and a few more remarks were interchanged. Shortly after, the doctor again turned to the ex-king, and with that air of polished complaisance for which he was so remarkable, invited him first, and then the rest of the company, to attend a morning prayer. It is scarcely necessary to add that the invitation was promptly complied with."—*Life of Dr. John H. Livingston*, p. 499.

Convention of 1830, on '*the propriety of studying the Bible as a classic in the institutions of a Christian country.*'

"This topic was considered as involving the inquiry whether such a study of the Bible as would make our youth familiar with its contents, and, as far as possible, with its literature and antiquities, ought not to form a part of the studies of seminaries of learning, in connexion with, or in addition to, such a course of scientific, classical, and religious instruction as may be deemed appropriate to the peculiar character of each institution.

"After an extensive correspondence with gentlemen of various religious opinions, the committee recommended in their report that the Bible should receive the respect and attention due to a classic in our literary institutions, on the ground that the importance of its subjects; its genuineness, authenticity, and reputation as a literary work; its unrivalled beauty and sublimity; its permanent and universal value; its happy influence on the intellectual and moral character; its value to a free people as the firmest basis of free institutions, the only incontrovertible 'bill of rights,' and its practical usefulness in life, give it higher claims to regard (aside from all questions of inspiration) than are possessed by any classic of ancient or of modern times; they believed that it could not be thoroughly taught if left to parents or Sunday-schools; and they had heard of several instances which proved that this study could be pursued in our seminaries of learning without exciting sectarian jealousy.

"After hearing the report, a special committee, to whom it was referred, recommended the following resolutions, which were adopted by the Convention :

"Resolved, that in the opinion of the Convention, the Bible has the strongest claims, founded on its literary character, to be received as a classic; and that the study of its contents ought to form a part of common education.

"Resolved, that the literature and antiquities of the Bible ought to constitute a part of every course of liberal education.

"Resolved, that a committee be appointed to prepare and report a plan of Biblical instruction, especially in reference to the academical and collegiate course, and that Dr. Milnor,

Dr. Maclay, W. C. Woodbridge, Professor Vethake, and Professor Woolsey, constitute the committee.'

"In compliance with the last resolution, and by direction of the Convention, the committee solicit your aid and counsels on the responsible task assigned them. The plans of Biblical instruction thus far known to the committee include one or more of the following methods:

"1. The study of the contents of the Bible in the English translation, commencing with the historical portions, and supplying the interval between the Old and New Testaments from secular history, and terminating with the poetical and prophetical books.

"2. The study of the Greek Testament in addition to this, with the same view, after the student is familiar with the Greek language.

"3. A course of instruction in the literature and antiquities of the Bible, following or connected with these studies, comprising an account of the origin, history, transmission, and translation of its respective books; of its chronology, style, and imagery; and of the Oriental manners and customs to which it alludes.

"4. The study of the Hebrew Scriptures.

"5. The general principles of interpretation, which some deem important, not only in reference to Biblical, but also to classical studies.

"The committee respectfully request your opinion, so soon as your convenience may admit, as to the extent to which these, or any other methods of Biblical instruction should be adopted in our literary institutions, at what periods they should commence, and in what manner they should be conducted.

"They would also be gratified by an account of any course of this kind which may have been heretofore pursued in your institution or within your knowledge, of the difficulties which may have been encountered, and of the results which have appeared, if not already communicated to the former committee.

"The information which may be obtained is designed to be presented to the Literary Convention in October next.

"The answer may be forwarded to the chairman of the committee, or to any one of its members, as may be most convenient.
On behalf of the committee."

"Rev. Dr. Fisk, President of the Wesleyan University.

"REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

"You will doubtless remember the appointment of the committee who have prepared the above circular, and who would have transmitted it to the colleges long since had not some delay taken place in New-York on the part of the publishing committee, in whose hands the business of lithographing this circular was left. When that committee, first mentioned, met, consisting of Dr. Milnor, Dr. Maclay, Mr. Woodbridge, and myself, it was unanimously resolved to request you, sir, to act as a member of the committee; and I was ordered to transmit that request as soon as I should have received the circulars. Now it is only within a short time that I have received them, and I therefore take this opportunity of sending to you a number, with the hope that you will honour the committee by participating in its labours. What is to be done is briefly this: certain colleges and certain individuals of standing were assigned to each committee-man, to whom circulars were to be sent, with such remarks subjoined as might seem best. You, sir, were requested to take upon you the Methodist colleges and higher public seminaries, and the principal individuals of that denomination, as the committee thought that you could obtain from them a more free and informal expression of views than one less acquainted with them. From the interest which you took in the proceedings of the Convention, and in this measure especially, the committee were led to believe that you would not consider the transmission of a few such circulars a burden.

"I am, sir, respectfully yours,

"THEODORE D. WOOLSEY."

In consequence of this application, Dr. Fisk addressed letters to several distinguished ministers of our own denomination, from whom he received answers more or less extended. From Professor Caldwell, of Dickinson College,

at that time principal of Maine Wesleyan Seminary, he received a valuable letter approving of the measure, but advocating the method of instruction by lectures rather than recitations, as more accordant with the nature of the subject, and less liable to degrade the Holy Scriptures to the level of a mere human production. The idea is well worth attention. From the Rev. Richard Watson he received a communication which will be read with interest by all the admirers of that truly great and good man. Dr. Fisk, it will be perceived, had also suggested to him the preparation of a work on Christian Ethics.

"London, October 19, 1832.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I thank you for your obliging communications, both of which have interested me greatly; and especially as they indicate the amazing advantages to be derived to a country when those who are concerned most deeply and professionally with the education of its youth are aware of the supreme importance of *revealed truth*, and feel how necessary it is to have that 'glory' upon all learning 'as a defence.' This is infinitely more important as the result of *conviction* and *experience*, than as enforced and bound by articles of faith, subscriptions, and the appropriation of college honours and ecclesiastical prospects to a cold and nominal orthodoxy.

"I feel with you, that a work on Morals and their philosophy, constructed on sound principles, and pursued under the guidance of Holy Writ, would be a most valuable acquisition to general literature as well as to a collegiate course. For myself, however, I do not feel adequate to the task, and think I could not, were I disengaged, satisfy myself to go out to the world at large; although, were I a lecturer on Moral Philosophy, I should certainly form my course on this plan, with the full conviction that I should find more true *philosophy* in it, as well as more influential *authority*. This, however, is decisive as to myself, were I to be encouraged to the work by your too flattering and kind estimate of my fitness, that I am engaged in a large and important undertaking, which occupies all my leisure from regular duties.

Let me therefore, in turn, commend the enterprise to you, who, from all I have heard, and from the publications of yours I have seen, have both *principles*, and a reach of *thought*, and a *philosophic* habit highly adapted to it. I speak from conviction, in the same Christian sincerity in which you have addressed me ; and I really think you could not bestow a better gift on the highly-important institution over which you preside.

“ On the other plan. That the literature of the Scriptures ought to be, in various degrees, according to the future profession of the students, taught in all Christian colleges, seems a proposition so obviously grounded upon fitness, and propriety, and duty, that the wonder is, that, in a course of education, the Bible has been, both by us, and you too, I presume, forgotten in colleges, or very slightly elucidated. The sketch contained in the circular appears judicious and comprehensive ; but I hesitate as to the way the matter is put. The Bible ought to be studied as an ancient *classic*—this is the ground.

“ Now, though I grant that if it had fared as well among critics as a Greek or Roman classic, we should not have had so much licentiousness of criticism, such unscholar-like doings with its text and its interpretation ; yet, on the other hand, a formal investment of the Scriptures with this human garb may court liberties which ought not to be tolerated. In some respects, it is true that the literature of the Bible assimilates with the ancient compositions of human genius ; but my notion is, that it is, in the main, *sui generis* throughout in its literature as well as theology. Let this be guarded, and a Biblical course, even when not pursued into the criticalities of the original tongues (those being reserved for ministers), would be a high improvement in your academical courses. Here is the Book of God, full of various learning : come, let us study it *as such*, and in its style, history, poetry, prophecy, doctrine, morals, &c., in all hear what *God the Lord* will speak, and how he speaks. This is the true ground to be kept in the question, as I conceive.

“ I am, my dear sir,

“ Your affectionate friend and brother,

“ R. WATSON.”

About this time Dr. Fisk received a letter from Dr. Ruter, president of Augusta College, asking his views on the introduction of the Bible as a study into institutions of learning, and wrote in return an extended reply; but, as this will probably be given to the world in another form, we need say no more of it here.

Unaffected modesty and humility were among the most shining of our subject's virtues. He never seemed conscious of his own position in the public eye. He neither affected to undervalue the marks of respect which he received, nor did he ever betray the least elation on their account. Many of them his friends would hardly have known but by their appearance in the public papers: yet they were conferred perpetually. We say nothing now of the great demand in which his services were held in his own denomination, nor of the letters of thanks he received for sermons, lectures, addresses, and the like, always couched in terms of highest eulogy, and generally containing assurances of the happiest results. Besides these, he received such tokens of esteem as are usually conferred on the most distinguished in the land. This year alone he received several. He was appointed by General Cass, secretary of war, one of the visitors of the United States Military Academy at West Point: he was elected to the presidency of the richly endowed College of Louisiana, and received high inducements to accept the place, besides the offer of three thousand dollars per annum; and in 1835 he was elected a member of the Rhode Island Alpha of the Phi-Beta-Kappa Society. But in the midst of all he maintained the same uniform simplicity, humble piety, and steady devotion that had marked his character when labouring in the humble sphere of an itinerant minister among the mountains of his native state. When he read or heard any favourable notice of himself in the public prints, he would generally remark, and often with a sigh, "They do not know me as I know myself."

How jealous he was of his own motives will be seen from a passage in a letter to Mrs. Fisk, written in Boston in the winter of 1832, while on one of his begging excursions. After speaking of his suffering from the intense cold of the season, he proceeds: "I seem never to arrive at that period

when I can favour myself. One enterprise after another comes upon me, and drives me to the work. And perhaps this is right; I might otherwise be indolent; but as it is, I find no time for idleness. And yet I often ask myself whether I am indeed labouring for God. You know there is a great share of ambition in my constitution, and this may be one of the inciting motives to action. When I consider in how many respects I am not what I should be, I am led to distrust my own motives in this ever-toiling life in which I am engaged. O, if I should fail of my reward at last by reason of a selfish heart and an unsanctified mind, what a disappointment! what a loss! My dear wife, pray for me; not so much for my bodily health, as that I may glorify God in my body and spirit, which are his."

We shall now lay before our readers passages from some interesting letters written about this period.

To the Reverend O. C. Baker.

"I am sorry to hear of your affliction in the loss of your mother, and I sympathize also with your surviving parent. But you both know where to go for comfort. O, who can lament that the one he loves has gone to heaven! Should we not rejoice, rather than grieve, that the object of our affections has anticipated us, and gained the crown first? Let them go, and we will follow. Heaven is a place good enough for your dear mother, but your heavenly Father saw that this earth was not."

On the occurrence of a severe accident to his aged mother, he wrote, January 3d:

* * * "I learn that you have had an additional visitation of Providence by a fall, dislocation, and a consequent lameness. Truly, my dear mother, you are afflicted in your declining years. I sincerely and deeply sympathize with you, and gladly would I afford you any succour and comfort in these visitations; but I am deprived of the privilege of affording you any personal aid or comfort by the distance which separates us. Daily, however, do I remember you in my feeble prayers, together with all others in the family. I

desire most ardently that the remainder of your days may be spent in peace and quiet. * * * It is, in truth, one of the strongest desires of my heart to have everything done that can be done to render the few remaining days of my parents as pleasant as possible. For this I would be willing to suffer and labour." * * *

"We have just been called to bury one of our professors, Reverend John M. Smith.* He died very suddenly of inflammation of the lungs, but has undoubtedly gone to rest. His soul was happy in God, and he rejoiced with unspeakable joy. I feel it to be a loud call to me to be also ready."

To a Lady on Infant Baptism.

"Middletown, February 27, 1833.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I am sorry to learn that your mind has been brought into trials from any cause, and especially from the one mentioned in your letter. I should be glad were it in my power to say something that would afford you any relief, but I can hardly expect it for two reasons: 1. Because, in the short compass of a sheet, I could not even begin to enter into the arguments on this subject. 2. Because, from the experience I have had, I believe there is hardly any point to which the minds of persons who once get an idea that they must be rebaptized, adhere so pertinaciously as to this. I have not the least doubt but the enemy of souls takes this method often to harass and afflict God's people, and keep them back from more important duties. I have known numbers who, by their own acknowledgment, had never been 'baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire,' by which I understand the blessing of sanctification, but who, nevertheless, had no particular exercises of mind about this, and yet the Spirit of God, as they say, would give them no rest on the subject of water baptism! But is it true that the Divine Spirit is more anxious that we should be baptized with water than with fire? And is it well pleasing to God that we are exercised, and *afflicted*, and *pained* about the former, when we

* Professor John M. Smith was an amiable, pious man, and an agreeable companion. His talents would no doubt have raised him to great eminence in his profession, had his life been spared. He still lives in the warm affections of all who knew him. He filled the chair of Ancient Languages.

are at ease about the latter ? My dear sister, do you enjoy the blessing of perfect love ? If not, do you think it attainable ? If so, would it not be wise to let this subject engross your soul wholly until you obtain the blessing ? Do not misunderstand me : I do not think *you* would mean to be obstinate, but I mean to say, that the subject is one well suited to be used by our arch enemy to injure our peace. I know what it is ; I have been through it all : I was once, on this question, a strong Baptist, but I have been convinced that I was in an error. I can therefore sympathize with you. But I do not believe it is well pleasing to God that you should afflict your soul on this question, whereas I have no doubt it is well pleasing to Satan ; for thereby you are kept from enjoyment, from a growth in grace, and from usefulness.

“ You ask for the Scripture warrant for baptizing infants. My reply must be short : I can only touch upon a few points. For a fuller discussion of this subject, I would refer you to an essay in a volume published at our Book Room, called ‘ Doctrinal Tracts.’

“ But, to say a word by way of argument, Do you believe God has always had a Church in the world ? Do you believe the Jews were his visible Church ? Do you believe the Christian Church was but the continuation of the Church of God, with increased light and privileges ? Were infants entitled to the seal of the covenant of faith in the Church of God before Christ ? Is not this indisputable ? The question should not be, then, whether they have any new grant to this privilege under the Gospel dispensation, but whether the old grant has been revoked. This turns the tables altogether. The Baptists ask us to show the New Testament authority ; we ask them to show us the New Testament prohibition. God’s charters never become obsolete unless he revokes them. One enactment of Jehovah is enough to the end of time. It is true, he revoked the burdensome ritual of his Old Testament Church, ‘ which neither they nor their fathers were able to bear ;’ but where is it said that he took away or circumscribed any of the privileges of his ancient Church ? Could the Jew bring his child with him to share in the seal of God’s covenant of grace, the blessings of which were received by faith (Rom., iv., 11), and shall I, un-

der a dispensation of *enlarged privileges*, be denied that favour? And by what authority? God has changed the seal from circumcision to baptism. This none will deny, because all believe the former to be the seal under the Old Testament dispensation, and all believe the latter to be the seal under the New Testament dispensation. The seal is changed, then, but is the subject? What an opportunity to let that be known, if it were so, when the seal was changed! When Christ said to his apostles, 'Go disciple all nations' (for so it reads in the original), 'baptizing them, &c.,' he ought to have added, to prevent mistakes, 'but not their children; *hereafter* they are not to be admitted to the seal of my visible Church.' Instead of this, however, the apostles went forth, and, as if they meant to renew the former privilege, they say, at the very first sermon after Christ's ascension, 'Repent and be baptized, &c., for the promise is to *you* and *your children*,' &c.—See Acts, ii., 38, 39.

"Does this look like revoking the former grant? The apostles did not so understand it; and this is the reason, doubtless, why their immediate successors practised infant baptism as a rite, which, had they not received it from the apostles themselves, and had it not been well understood to have apostolic authority, would not have been introduced *immediately*, or, if introduced, not without some opposition and dissension. But of such an opposition to infant baptism there is not the least vestige on record; on the contrary, all speak of it at that early period as a thing of course.

"Again: Infants ought to be admitted to baptism, because they are *proper subjects* of the ordinance. Our Saviour himself has decided this question: 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Are all *justified* persons fit subjects of the seal? *Infants* are justified (Romans, v., 18). But you say, perhaps they will grow up wicked: not always. If infants and children were taken care of by the Church as they should be, I doubt whether there would be so many ungodly children raised up in the bosom of the Church. The Church obligate themselves, by the sacred rites of baptism, to train up these children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. If they fail of this, let not the ordinance of God be blamed.

Besides, adult believers may apostatize. Would you baptize a backslider again who had once been a church member, but apostatized and lost his justification, and was afterward reclaimed ?

“ Why, then, rebaptize a child who had lost his early justification, when ‘ he was of the kingdom of God,’ but is afterward restored ? Do you say the apostles taught to *believe* and be baptized ? This was when they went out to ‘ disciple’ those families and communities which were not disciples before. So we should preach now, when we go to pagans or Jews, or even adult citizens of a Christian community who have not been baptized. So Abraham was required to *believe*, and circumcision was given him as a seal of the ‘ righteousness he had *by faith* ;’ and yet it extended to his children. Will you ask, as the Baptists often do, What advantage is it to the child ? I might answer by asking, What advantage is baptism to the adult ? What advantage was circumcision to the child anciently ? And, though this would be an all-sufficient answer, I will say it is of much advantage if properly attended to ; more, if possible, to the child even than to the adult. It throws an obligation on the child, into the nature of which he should be early instructed ; and it throws an obligation upon the parent and upon the Church as solemn as the oath of God. And if the Church has not felt this, blame not the ordinance or Him who instituted it, but let the blame fall where it belongs.

“ Dear sister, be pleased to weigh these considerations ; and if your difficulties continue, write again, and tell me wherein ; and if they are removed, inform me. I shall rejoice in having been able to throw any light on your mind.”

There is a certain spurious benevolence in the world, that expends itself on distant objects, and overlooks the more familiar. And, indeed, there is always danger lest those engaged in the higher and wider spheres of usefulness should content themselves with the general benevolence of their aims, while they come not down to the humbler objects of every-day life. The danger is lest they substitute some selfish motive in place of true philanthropy, which, like the char-

ity of Heaven, remits not its care for individuals in its concern for the species. Such was not the case with our subject. While at the head of many important enterprises, he never overlooked the claims of ordinary life. His charities were warm and active, and were dispensed as freely upon the nearest objects as upon the most remote. His benevolence never waited for a splendid occasion, nor stopped to consider the chances of notoriety. The following letters help to confirm these observations. The first, addressed to a valued relative, was written at the same time with the foregoing letter to his mother :

“ I am happy to learn that the good work of reformation is going on with you, and should be pleased to share in it, and make one in your interesting religious meetings, if circumstances would permit. May the work continue to spread until ‘ all the proud, and they that do wickedly,’ and all the unsound professors,* shall be brought to the foot of the cross. It is well that the hollow-hearted and formal professor should look about himself and tremble ; for many, doubtless, are dreaming of heaven who will never get there. I am sorry, however, that C. K. should suffer Satan to alarm and discourage his soul. It is all a temptation, I have no doubt. I have the fullest confidence in his piety. I know, however, that my confidence will not satisfy him. He must feel it for himself, and ‘ then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.’ Had I the privilege, however, I would say some things to him which perhaps might, by God’s blessing, do him good. I would, in the first place, advise him not to make the apparent exercises of others any criterion for himself ; and, in the second place, I would specially exhort him and strongly advise him not to spend much time or suffer much anxiety about the *past*. An *old hope* would be worth but little if he could find it, provided he had not *now* a *living hope* of a heavenly inheritance. And all that is necessary for a present hope is a present faith. One of the greatest excellences of the Christian system is, that it admits of our coming to Christ *now, as we are*, no

* Alluding to an expression in his correspondent’s letter.

matter what we have been or what we are : there is enough in Christ now to meet our case. Is not this true ? Is it not Gospel ? Why, then, should any doubt ? C. K. will not, cannot doubt, when he takes this view of the subject. May God cheer his heart with the new wine of the kingdom."

On learning that this message of love had not produced the desired result, he addressed a letter to the wife of this afflicted person, accompanied by one for himself. We insert them both :

"March 22, 1833.

"DEAR C—— M——,

"Deeply do I sympathize with you and your afflicted husband, but not without hope. I cannot but believe that God will appear for your deliverance. I have written what I could to meet his case ; perhaps God may bless some word to the good of his soul. Pray and believe : let not any forebodings of the future prey upon you. Our Deliverer is mighty, and we shall triumph. Perhaps by this trial you will be able to say, more than ever, ' My soul is even as a weaned child.' This affliction may be working out for you *all* ' a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.' Mrs. Fisk joins with me in love to you and your dear mother, and in tender sympathy and condolence with your afflicted husband. May God bless you all, and after that you have suffered a while, make you perfect, ' establish, strengthen, settle you.'

"Most affectionately, your sympathizing kinsman, friend,
and brother in Christ, W. FISK."

"Middletown, March 22, 1833.

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND BROTHER,

"I heard by cousins C. and L. Fisk that the adversary of God and man was sorely tempting you with gloom and despondency respecting your spiritual state and future prospects. This induced me to indite a few lines to you in a former letter. Since that, I received a letter from cousin C., in which he spoke of having received letters from B., and that all was well, &c., from which I inferred that the power

of the tempter was broken. I am sorry, however, to learn that this was incorrect, and that you are still in a state of despondency. Now, for myself, I have no doubt that this is nothing more or less than the temptation of the devil, strengthened, perhaps, by indisposition and bodily debility; yet I have seen so many such cases, I almost despair of convincing you of this. I know, when unbelief gets hold of the mind, it leads it to be skilful in turning everything against itself, and causes its afflicted victim to dash from his lips the cup of salvation, though pressed upon him by the hand of Divine mercy. However, I will not despair. God hath sent me 'to bind up the broken-hearted, and to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison doors to them that are bound.' Come, then, my afflicted brother, gird up the loins of thy mind, and let us reason together. I come to plead the cause of Christ, the merits of his blood, the efficacy of his grace: and what have you to object to these merits and this grace? 'Nothing,' perhaps you say; 'but I am a wretched sinner; I have deceived myself, and shut myself out of the mercy of God.' Before I reply to this, permit me to premise one thing, viz., I have nothing to do, and you need have nothing to do, with the question, 'Have I ever been converted?' This I know not, though I most sincerely believe you have. But suppose the worst; suppose you have deceived yourself, and others have been deceived in you, still what I wish to say, and what I am prepared to maintain by the word of God, is, that Jesus Christ is a Saviour exactly suited to your present state and character. You may say, perhaps, that 'I know not your heart; that you are a great sinner,' &c. All this may be; and yet I know, were you ten times as great a sinner as even you think yourself to be, Jesus Christ is a greater Saviour, and his grace is sufficient for you. You may say, perhaps, that you have the fullest conviction that you are lost, and there is no mercy for you. I reply, I have the fullest conviction that you are not, and that *Heaven is full of mercy for you*. But you say, I do not know your case as well as you know it. It may be so; but I know something of the Gospel; I know something of the riches of Divine grace,

something of the love of Christ; I know that 'this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save the *chief of sinners*.' Do you stop to inquire whether God will *permit* you to believe in Christ as a *privilege*? Why, my dear sir, he *commands* you to believe in him as a *duty*. Have you a case too hard for our Almighty Jesus? Do you challenge the power of Divine grace? Does your case set at defiance the omnipotence of Divine love? Read Ephesians, iii., 14 to 21, and when you come to the 20th verse, read it over and over, and tell me, if you can, what this expression meaneth, '*according to the power that worketh in us*.' O, what a power is this! Why, God can break the jaws of the lion, and take the prey from the mighty. In view of such a wonder-working God, shall we talk about the difficulty of our case? Shall it be known in the universe of God that there is one poor miserable wretch that was bought by the blood of Christ, and lived under the sound of the Gospel, and desired salvation, and was ready to sacrifice everything for it, but he could not obtain it? Such a fact would fill hell with shouts of triumph, and cover heaven with sackcloth. If one such a soul *must* be lost, then all is lost; the Saviour is proved to be inadequate to his work. Let it no longer be said, 'He has led captivity captive, and received gifts for rebellious men.' But, thank God, there is no such failure. Jesus is 'strong to deliver and mighty to redeem.'

"He cannot hear a sinner pray,
And suffer him to die."

"Do you ask, 'Why, then, does he not deliver me?' Because you do not believe on him; you have doubted whether his grace was sufficient for *you*. Doubt no more; throw yourself upon him; take him at his word; if you go down to the pit, *sink through his promise*; nay, cling to the promise; carry it with you wherever you go; 'sink or swim, survive or perish,' cleave to the promise of God. Remember! '*God is not man, that he should lie*.' But you say, 'I know not that God has made any promise to *me*.' Indeed, he has not, *unless you are a sinner*: prove to me you are not a sinner, and I will acknowledge there is not a promise for you

in the Gospel charter. 'Ah! but I am a great sinner,' you say; 'that is my difficulty, the ground of all my fear.' Say, rather, the only ground of your hope in Christ. If you are a great sinner, you are in the better case for Jesus to magnify the riches of his grace towards you. Do you know where it is written, 'Where sin *abounded*, grace did *much more abound*?' Has sin abounded in you? Then are these promises for you. O that God would open your eyes to see them, and your heart to feel them! O that you could hear the voice of him who hath said, 'Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I WILL GIVE YOU REST!' Listen to that voice, my weary, sorrowing, burdened brother! O listen, and believe! Methinks I hear that voice come ringing down, through the lapse of centuries, sweet and fresh as when first it dropped from his gracious lips. That invitation and promise, my dear brother, is for thee. Does it not fall on thy ear like a powerful charm to break the spell of Satan, and set thy spirit free? Does it not melt thy heart and sooth thy soul?

" 'Stung by the scorpion sin,
Thy poor expiring soul
The balmy sound drinks in,
And is at once made whole:
New songs do now thy lips employ,
And dances thy glad heart for joy.'

"Such, I doubt not, is or will be the victory of thy soul. With this hope I will conclude. Only be assured of this, that my feeble prayers will go up to the mercy-seat for you. 'Satan has desired to have thee, that he may sift thee as wheat; but when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.'

"From your affectionate friend and brother,

"W. FISK."

About this period Dr. Fisk received a letter from a stranger seeking religious advice. He was a native of Germany, of superior education, and early impressions of Divine truth. But, having got entangled in the labyrinth of German metaphysics, his heart had wandered from God. Unable to find rest, he had again become an earnest inquirer after the right way, and was now in a state of great anxiety. The first let-

ter which he received in answer to his inquiries has not reached us. The second is as follows :

To Mr. William Nast, Benvenu, Dauphin county, Penn.

"Middletown, March 12, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"Since receiving yours, I have been so occupied as to be scarcely at leisure to write to you; and now I can say but a word. I am deeply afflicted at your sorrow. I sympathize with you, and would fain comfort you. But I am aware, from numerous instances that I have witnessed, that your kind of despondency readily changes every consideration into the same gloomy hue with the other images of the mind, even though such consideration be designed to cheer the heart. Permit me to say, however, if you have not yet obtained relief, *I am confident* you will.

"'Can Jesus hear a sinner pray,
Yet suffer him to die?'

"'No, he is full of grace;
He never will permit
A soul that fain would see his face,
To perish at his feet.'

"You take wrong views of the Gospel, my brother. Christ directed 'repentance and remission of sins to be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem'—sins—not some sins, but all. And that none need despair, he commended this offer among those whose hands were not yet washed from the blood of him who now, through the same blood, offered them salvation; and who are you, my brother, that claimest to have produced a case *too hard* for an almighty Saviour? Hell might indeed triumph if this were true, and the blessed Jesus own himself conquered; but, thanks to his name, *he has triumphed*; he has 'led captivity captive, and received gifts for rebellious man.' 'But it is so just,' you think, 'to cast you off.' Yes, so it would be to cast us all off. But then you 'have sinned so much, and against such great light.' So much the better opportunity for the Saviour to show that 'where sin abounds, grace does much more abound.'

"But let me say again, you take wrong views of yourself.

You think your wretched feelings are in consequence of your being so great a sinner ; but it is rather because you do not reject (your sins). Christ is willing to save you from (your) sins ; but you cannot trust him, and therefore (your) sin and wretchedness remain. You (say that) you need more light and more strength, (that) you may be able to see Christ and (love him) ; but you mistake. You only need (to go to) Christ that you may have light (and strength). Take Christ, then, in the present (time for) *everything*. I entreat of you, I command you to receive Christ. The reception of Christ (is) not merely a privilege which you may possibly attain to by the Divine favour, but it is a duty which you cannot neglect without Divine displeasure. Ask, then, not whether you *may* receive the atonement, whether God will permit it. You must : God commands it.

“(You see), then, you have utterly mistaken (your) own case and the character of the (Gospel). Do not, then, longer dishonour the (Saviour) and injure your soul. Remember, ‘As many as received Christ, to them gave he power (to become) the sons of God.’

“ Affectionately yours,
“ W. FISK.”

What the immediate effect of this truly evangelical epistle was we have not heard. That it was highly prized and diligently perused, are indicated by its tattered condition. Many parts, as the reader may judge from the number of words supplied in parentheses, are entirely obliterated. The gentleman to whom it was addressed has since become favourably known as a useful minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the able editor of the German Apologist, published at Cincinnati for the benefit of the German population of the United States.

To the Rev. C. K. True.

“ August 3, 1833.

“With respect to my illness, the cause, progress, and cure, they are briefly these : The pulmonary complaint with which you know me to be afflicted has hung around me

from my childhood. When I first commenced preaching, I could speak but once on the Sabbath, and rarely once through the week. I gradually gained in strength, however, and in *courage*, or, rather, *presumption*, faster than in health. When I was stationed in Charlestown I saw much to do; I was *inexperienced*, *indiscreet*, and zealous. I preached thrice on the Sabbath, besides some other extra labours; attended one or more meetings every day; visited daily eight or ten families, and talked, sung, and prayed with them all; attended camp-meetings, and there laboured night and day, and often prayed and preached *at the top* of my voice, and *fell suddenly*, when in other respects I was as well as usual. Through irritation and inflammation of the lungs I was confined about six months; got able to ride, and spent nearly two years in courting the nymph Hygeia on my native mountains, or, to speak more like a Christian, in doing penance for my indiscretion, perhaps I ought to say my folly, and in the use of means waiting for God to heal me. The time was almost a blank. I studied none, because I *could not* study. The system was like a bundle of feeble nerves, which were disorganized by every effort at study. I spent much of my time on horseback, which, under God, was my great restorator. Since that time I have learned in most cases to stop considerably short of the extreme point of endurance. I find, the way to sell my life to the enemy as dear as possible, is to use it *sparingly*, that I may use it *longer*. I expect to sacrifice life sooner or later; but, by the aid of Providence, I hope not to throw it away. If, like Samson, I am ever placed in a situation where one mighty, *martyring* effort is likely to shake down the temple of sin, and in my *death* I can slay more than in my *life*, then *here is the sacrifice*. I can assure you, my brother, the devil likes nothing better than to offer up scores of Methodist preachers on the altar of an *indiscreet zeal*. I should, indeed, except one thing: he would prefer destroying their zeal altogether, because he knows, if they die fighting, they *will not die alone*. Better that they all die *this year* than lose their zeal. But let that zeal be tempered."

To the Rev. O. C. Baker.

"Middletown, September 18, 1833.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"I know how to sympathize with you in your present feeble state of health. Before I began to preach I was in a similar state for eight or nine months, and since I began I have had one turn of nearly two years, in which I was laid by as a *broken vessel*. I never experienced anything more trying than this. To be reconciled to be *nothing*; nay, worse, to be a useless burden to my friends and the world, was an extent of resignation which not only brought into requisition the little grace I had, but forced me to pray earnestly for more. This kind of experience, however, will do you no harm; it is sent by your heavenly Father in mercy, and will result in good; besides, you have hope in the distance even in this world, and that, too, not *very distant*. I cannot think your constitution is broken: you are young, and the vigorous energies of nature will heal the breaches and repair the wastes; only it becomes you to this end that you take a prudent course. Let me counsel you a little, not as a physician, but as a man who has added to common-sense views a little painful experience: First, then, if you feel the body and the mind feeble, study *none* and read but little; ride much on horseback in pleasant weather; visit friends *far* and *near*, but *never* be induced by them either to keep irregular hours or to exert yourself beyond your strength. This winter, if your health gets so that you can bear it, take in about a dozen scholars of an age to need but little care, and teach them. In one year, perhaps in six months, you will find your strength returning, and you will be able to increase your exertions, always taking care that you do not go beyond your strength. This watching one's *bodily* symptoms, I know, is rather *earthly* business, but then we have to take care of the *house* for the sake of the *tenant*; but be sure in all this you do not get notional and spleeny, as it is sometimes termed. This is a difficult point to adjust—to take enough of care, and not too much; especially *talk but little* about the body; this is injurious to health, unprofitable to the soul, and wearisome to friends.

"You could not graduate here without an examination. Let mathematics alone for the present; you can get them hereafter if God pleases; if not, no matter. Do not be solicitous about what you shall do hereafter. Business as well as grace, this life as well as another, the body as well as the soul, require that we *should walk by faith*. Sufficient for the day are its *duties*, as well as its sorrows or joys.

"My love to friends, and believe me, as ever, your friend and brother,
W. FISK."

We have already seen that the diversity of views existing in different sections of our country had introduced some collision of mind into our ecclesiastical, as well as into civil affairs. To our subject this conflict was peculiarly painful; indeed, it made him, in some degree, undervalue the importance of unity in our ecclesiastical organization, as he could see no prospect of an adjustment of these differences. Take the following in evidence upon this point: At the General Conference of 1828, he writes to Mrs. Fisk from Pittsburgh, "There is evidently a difference in habits, in feelings, in views, between the South and West on one part, and the North and East on the other; and it is very probable it will ultimately terminate in a division of the Methodist Episcopal Church into Northern and Southern; and I confess, though such an idea was at first painful to me, I have begun to look upon it as an event not altogether undesirable, and perhaps not unprofitable." But it is worthy of observation, that greater experience, and more extended knowledge and information, entirely changed his views. On the margin of the passage quoted from his letter of May, 1828, there is a note in his handwriting, dated January, 1837, thus: "Farther experience convinces me that this would be both undesirable and unprofitable to Church and State." This is clear and decided testimony, and must be regarded as the last, best decision of a most competent judge; nor does it possess any the less, but rather greater, weight from his having once thought differently.

This subject began to appear before him in its true light at the General Conference of 1832. He saw now the effect

of the combined wisdom and strength of the whole Church, in the facility and resources thereby furnished for carrying on its sacred purposes. He also felt that the different sections of country exercised a salutary influence on each other, placing a check or applying a stimulant as might be required; and thus the very differences which exist might be made instructive and useful. But enough. My remarks are intended only to introduce an extract from a letter to the Reverend Ignatius A. Few, who applied to Dr. Fisk for some information or advice in organizing the Georgia Manual Labour School, of which he had been recently appointed principal:

" Middletown, Conn., March 19, 1833.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

" Your esteemed favour of the 1st instant gave me great pleasure. My attachment to my brethren in all parts of our work was never greater, I think never so great, as since our last General Conference. It was the third I have attended, and the most pleasant of the three. It is true, there was some 'wordy warfare;' but, in respect to myself, no loss, but rather a gain, of brotherly love. I feel more the spirit, and see more the need of the union of all parts of that Church that is the mother of us all. My motto is, 'The Church,' 'the whole Church;' and I may add, in view of the most extended relations and bearings of the Christian cause, 'nothing but the Church.' "

Meantime Dr. Fisk lost none of his interest in the important enterprises of the day. The cause of Temperance, especially, which was steadily widening and deepening its influence, still lay very near his heart. In the month of May, 1833, he delivered, at the anniversary of the New-York City Temperance Society, his celebrated address on the nature of the traffic in ardent spirits. This branch of the subject was almost new. The consumers of the article were the principal objects of attack, while the manufacturers and venders were but little disturbed. An inquiry into the morality of the trade, therefore, was not only novel, it was bold, evincing no slight share of moral courage. It was fortunate for him and the cause that his mode of presenting the sub-

ject was so clear and dispassionate. He selected his ground with great caution, laid down his premises fairly and distinctly, and deduced his conclusions so justly that few would be likely to controvert them. This done, his close, searching, powerful appeals carried home with them a mighty force, and yet they could scarcely give offence. No wonder that he was greatly successful. The address on this occasion was among his happiest efforts. Its novelty took the audience by surprise, and its clearness, boldness, and power excited their admiration. It was soon published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and was everywhere read with great avidity. It was subsequently printed at the Book Concern as a tract, and has had a wide circulation.

M M

CHAPTER XIV.

Mission to Liberia.—Translation of the New Testament into the Mohawk Language.—Oregon Mission.—Calvinistic Controversy.

WE have not adhered, as the reader has no doubt observed, to very rigid chronological order in our notice of some of the more prominent enterprises in which our subject was engaged. We supposed it would be more agreeable to follow out some topics consecutively than to break them up into fragments merely to preserve the order of time. This is the case with the cause of missions.

We have already had some intimation of the interest Dr. Fisk took in the evangelization of the heathen. The address of the General Conference of 1828 to the British Conference, which was written by him, as before mentioned, and from which we made some extracts, bears strong testimony to this point. This feeling was very strongly enlisted in behalf of the mission to Liberia; and it was at his instigation that the Young Men's Missionary Society at New-York pledged themselves to the support of a missionary in that field. He even offered to go out himself in that capacity; an offer which the board declined, in consequence of a strong remonstrance from the friends of the Wesleyan University. In consequence of this, in the year 1832, the Rev. Melville B. Cox, of precious memory, was appointed; an appointment, however, which had been in contemplation for some time before. He ever continued his interest in this mission; went several times to New-York for the purpose of aiding to raise funds, and in various ways contributed essentially to the object.

Another enterprise in which he was prominent deserves notice. Our missions among the various tribes of Indians in Upper Canada had been very successful, astonishing reformations had been effected, and numerous and flourishing churches established. But the converts suffered much inconvenience and detriment for want of a knowledge of the

Holy Scriptures, a part only of the New Testament having been translated and published in their language. Under these circumstances, Dr. Fisk prevailed on the Young Men's Bible Society of New-York to undertake the translation and printing of the New Testament in the Mohawk language, that being the most prevalent dialect among the tribes in that region. He was a speaker at one of the earliest meetings of that society, at which the Rev. William Case and several converted Indians were present. Mr. Case, in moving the resolution to adopt the report of the Board of Managers, dwelt upon the destitute condition of the Indians, and expressed a strong desire to see their wants supplied. Dr. Fisk, in seconding this resolution, spontaneously moved to amend the same, by adding that the society, aided by the parent society and the auxiliaries, would pledge themselves to raise the sum of three thousand dollars for the purpose of translating and publishing the entire New Testament in the Mohawk language. The amendment prevailed, and a very liberal contribution to the object was made on the spot. Nor did his labours end here. While the society, through various obstacles, were prosecuting this work, he repeatedly visited New-York to preach, or make addresses in its behalf, or otherwise give it his support. When it was completed, "he rejoiced with exceeding great joy" that the thousands of the tribes who understood this language were now enabled to read for themselves the words of the Great Spirit. The meeting at which Dr. Fisk made the proposal was held in 1831 : the translation was completed in 1839.

In the year 1833 originated one of the most intensely interesting missions ever projected in the Christian Church. I allude to the mission to the Flathead Indians, or, more properly speaking, to Oregon Territory. As Dr. Fisk was very closely connected with this undertaking—indeed, was the father of it—we shall lay its history before the reader.

About this period, or somewhat earlier, there arrived at St. Louis, in Missouri, a deputation of four men from some of the Indian tribes situated in the region of the Columbia River and its tributaries. They had left their homes, crossed the Rocky Mountains, and travelled near three thousand

miles through the wilderness to learn something of the true God. They had been excited to this inquiry, according to some, by an adventurer who had found his way into their country, and was providentially present at one of their idolatrous feasts. He told them that their mode of worshipping the Great Spirit was altogether wrong and displeasing to him. He also related that the white men "away towards the sun rising" had a book that taught them how to worship God acceptably. Struck with the tidings, they immediately called a national council to consider the subject, the result of which was, that they determined on despatching four of their chiefs in quest of information so important. On this wonderful mission they had come to visit General Clarke, the fellow-traveller of Lewis through the Oregon Territory, of whom they had heard, who now resided at St. Louis as superintendent of Indian affairs under the general government. They looked up to this gentleman with great respect, and believed him to be the most likely person to afford them the information they desired. It has also been said that two of the four deputies had spent some time at a Catholic school in Canada, and that their communications aided in the excitement of this spirit of inquiry.

They reached St. Louis in safety, where they were kindly received and entertained by General Clarke. How great must have been his astonishment at learning the object of their perilous undertaking! And greatly did he feel the responsibility that rested upon him in being unexpectedly called on for an exposition of the Christian faith. He satisfied their inquiries as far as he could; related the principal incidents in Scripture history from the creation to the birth of the Saviour; informed them of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ, and explained the doctrines and precepts of the Christian religion. Few preachers have ever had such an audience. They listened, no doubt, with profound attention and the most lively interest, expecting to carry back to their countrymen the words they were now hearing. But, alas! they did not all live to bear home the tidings. Change of climate and mode of life produced disease, and two of them finished their earthly pilgrimage at

St. Louis. The other two, we understand, reached their homes in safety.

On Thursday evening, March 1st, 1833, the above account, furnished by G. P. Disosway, Esq., from a letter written to him by Mr. Wm. Walker, the exploring agent of the Wyandotts, appeared in the columns of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. Dr. Fisk, on the evening when he received it, was more than usually engaged in writing letters for the University, of which several had to go into the mail the following morning. Nevertheless, according to his usual custom when that paper was handed to him, he ran his eye over the contents to see whether anything demanded immediate attention. On seeing the above narrative, he immediately remarked to Mrs. Fisk, "I have something interesting to read;" and, having read the article aloud, he said, "We will have a mission there."

"It would be a noble enterprise," remarked Mrs. Fisk; "but where will you get the man?"

"I know," was the answer, "of but one in the world every way qualified for such an undertaking, and you know who that is."

"Yes," she replied, "but you are too late for him. You know it is about time for Mr. Lee to apply for admittance into the British Conference." Mr. Lee was in Canada.

He instantly called for pen and ink, and, without sitting down, wrote to Mr. Lee to ascertain whether he would engage in the enterprise, should the Church see fit to appoint him. In half an hour or less the letter was in the postoffice. He soon received word from Mr. Lee that he had already applied to the British Conference for admittance, but that he should prefer the mission, and would engage in it cheerfully, should Providence open the way. By some miscarriage of letters or other derangement, he received no answer to his application to the British Conference, and, having waited a reasonable time, he signified his readiness to engage in the Oregon Mission. Thus, by individual promptitude and providential arrangement, this noble undertaking was originated.

Dr. Fisk's next step was to insert the following heraldic cry in the *Advocate*:

"Hear! Hear! Who will respond to the call from beyond the Rocky Mountains?"

"Messes. Editors,

"The communication of Brother G. P. Disosway, including one from the Wyandott agent on the subject of the deputation of the Flathead Indians to General Clarke, has excited in many in this section intense interest. And, to be short about it, we are for having a mission established there at once. I have proposed the following plan: Let two suitable men, unencumbered with families, and possessing the spirit of martyrs, throw themselves into the nation. Live with them; learn their language; preach Christ to them; and, as the way opens, introduce schools, agriculture, and the arts of civilized life. The means for these improvements can be introduced through the fur-traders, and by the reinforcements with which, from time to time, we can strengthen the mission. Money shall be forthcoming. I will be bondsman for the Church. All we want is the men. Who will go? Who? I know of one young man who I think will go, and of whom I can say I know of none like him for the enterprise. If he will go (and we have written to him on the subject), we only want another, and the mission will be commenced the coming season. Were I young and healthy, and unencumbered, how joyfully would I go! But this honour is reserved for another. Bright will be his crown, glorious his reward. Affectionately yours,

"W. FISK.

"Wesleyan University, March 9, 1833."

This stirring appeal was followed up by suitable measures to raise funds; but so deep and pervading was the interest excited in the public mind, that these began to flow in rapidly. Societies and individuals, both of our own and other denominations, from different parts of the country, tendered their contributions. Indeed, it began to be feared that this mission would absorb too great a portion of the Church's sympathy, and so injure others; and hence Dr. Fisk was induced to publish a request that it might be left to the es-

pecial care of the missionary societies of Middletown, New-Haven, and Hartford.

The following notice was inserted in the New-York Observer of August 7, 1833. It is delightful to see Christians of different sects thus aiding each other, and rejoicing in each other's labours. May the monitory hints these lines contain prove a blessing to our readers who may be engaged in the missionary cause.

" Flathead Indians.

" We rejoice to learn that a very deep and extensive interest is felt in the success of the mission which our Methodist brethren are about to send to this interesting tribe in the Rocky Mountains. The following letter has been forwarded to us for publication :

" 'REV. WILLBUR FISK, D.D.—SIR,

" ' I was interested in the account recently given in some of the public journals of the solicitude of the Flathead Indians to know the true God, and how to worship him.

" ' The appeal made by you in their behalf derived weight from the assurance given by you, that if younger, you would yourself carry the Gospel to them. While I rejoice that you have taken up this subject with so much zeal, I still more rejoice that devoted men of ardent piety have consecrated themselves to this holy employment. Let them endeavour to possess the prudence of Swartz, the humility of Brainerd, the learning of Martyn, the devotedness of Fisk, the self-denial of Judson, the untiring ardour of Gutzlaff, and, with the blessing of the God of missions on their labours, they may hope soon to see these children of the forest becoming sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty.

" ' Funds will be required to accomplish your benevolent undertaking, and the enclosed \$50 will not, I trust, be the less acceptable from the circumstance that it is presented by one not of your denomination.

" ' I shall learn that the money reaches you safely if the receipt of it is acknowledged in the New-York Observer.

" ' Yours, &c.,

X. X.

" ' New-London, July 19.'

"We learn also from Mr. G. P. Disosway, of this city, to whom, with his friend Walker of the Wyandott nation, the Christian world are indebted for the first notice of these extraordinary inquirers after 'the truth,' that a young gentleman in the interior of this state has offered the whole of his property, amounting to \$2000, in aid of this mission, provided he can have the privilege of being usefully employed himself in that field of labour. The same gentleman informs us that the account of the visit of these Indians has recently been published in the *Journal Officiel de l'Instruction Publique*, which is the official paper of the University, Royal Institution of France, and several other literary and scientific institutions. The publication of such intelligence in this journal indicates that there is some feeling on the subject even in Catholic France. No mission which has been undertaken in modern times seems to have excited such deep and general interest."

The appeal thus made to the sympathy of Christians spread throughout the country like lightning, and enkindled a holy ardour in many hearts. The effect was surprising. In one year the income of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church more than doubled. Thus the expansion of sympathy develops resources. We scarcely know what are our capabilities until the mind is quickened to unusual action, and the heart enlarged by powerful emotion. The influence in bringing forth funds was hardly exceeded by its effect in drawing men into the missionary cause. One noble offer has been mentioned already. The following is another. It is contained in a letter directed to Dr. Fisk.

"New-Madrid Circuit, Missouri, April 15, 1833.

"DEAR BROTHER,

"A few weeks ago, in the *Christian Advocate*, I met with the Flathead Indian chiefs' visit to St. Louis, and was much affected by that relation. Had I received this intelligence sooner, and been without any engagement, I think that I should not have hesitated to go with the chiefs on my own

responsibility. I learned, however, by that account that the chiefs had returned, and thus my thoughts on the subject were for a while suspended. I have for some time felt a strong desire to engage in missionary service, and have been waiting for some door to be opened by the Head of the Church, that I might enter in and labour. During the past week I have been severely exercised. I felt that some great change was about to take place in my condition, which time and Providence alone could explain. While in this state of anxious suspense, waiting for the Almighty to unfold his designs, your letter in the Advocate, stating that a mission to the Flathead Indians is determined upon, fell into my hands, and it appeared as an electric spark to burst the cloud that had so long enveloped my mind. You ask, 'Who will go as a missionary to the Flatheads?' I fully believe that it is the will of God that I should go, and, consequently, I offer myself for the service. I have counted the cost, and expect it will be perpetual exile from civilized life, toil, danger, hardship, and probably premature death; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto me, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus.

"It is about two years ago since, in the State of New-York, we heard the cry from the distant West, 'Come over to Missouri and help us.' I came over, and brought my free-will offering, and was permitted to witness such an outpouring of the Divine Spirit, that I then resolved, if such were the high remunerations of Heaven, should the cry for help ever again be heard from the setting sun, that I would be the first to respond to it. Little, indeed, did I then think that this would ever be the case; but the ways of God are mysterious.

"An event altogether unprecedented in the annals of the Christian Church has taken place. The messengers of a distant nation have suddenly, Heaven directed, appeared before us to ask the bread of everlasting life, and a knowledge of the white man's God.

"I shall rejoice to be commissioned by our Church to carry the tidings of salvation over the Rocky Mountains, and

there to plant the tree of life among the distant sons of the forest, that it may bear its immortal fruits for the service of the surrounding natives. How vast the good that may result from such an establishment ! Gospel truth, like a mighty river, may roll onward and downward to generations unborn.

“ If you think my offer worth attention, I shall be glad to hear from you as soon as possible, and will give you any information in relation to myself that you may wish.

“ I remain, dear brother, yours, &c.,

“ R. W. OWEN.

“ Rev. Willbur Fisk.”

But the men were already provided for this work. The Rev. Jason Lee, and his nephew, the Rev. Daniel Lee, had been accepted by the Missionary Society, and appointed by Bishop Hedding, together with Mr. Cyrus Shepherd as school-teacher. In the month of November they were ready to commence their perilous and tedious journey, and had already held various public meetings to take leave of the churches, and commend the undertaking to their prayers and patronage. They were, however, greatly at a loss for information as to their route, and as to the arrangements necessary for the journey. After having used every effort to procure information, there seemed little hope for them but to commence their journey, as Abraham did of old, scarcely knowing whither they went, and depending on such intelligence as they could gather by the way. How great, then, was their delight to learn, the very day after the Farewell Meeting in the City of New-York, that Captain Wyeth had arrived at Boston from Oregon, whither he had been on a trading expedition. This seemed like an opening of Providence. By the advice of the Missionary Board, they now turned their course to Boston. On this journey Dr. Fisk accompanied them, aiding them by his counsel, and holding public meetings with them. He preached on Friday and on Sunday evenings in the Bromfield-street Church, and on the former occasion Captain Wyeth answered, in the presence of the congregation, sundry questions touching the prospects of a mission to Oregon, and gave much information

highly valuable to the missionaries. From this city Dr. Fisk wrote to Mrs. Fisk: "Our visit to Captain Wyeth has been most providential. He is going out with a party in the spring, and will take the missionaries under his protection. He will go quite over the mountains. He is a fine man. They will also send out a vessel that will carry any necessary freight. Much information has also been obtained of great importance to the mission. I cannot state the details."

Early in the spring the missionaries proceeded to St. Louis, holding public meetings at every important town, and everywhere quickening the Church to effort. The latter part of April they started from St. Louis, on horseback, for the place appointed to meet the trading companies, and thence over the Rocky Mountains, three thousand miles away from the abodes of civilization. The perils of the wilderness, especially to men unaccustomed to such a life, were great; but, while the traders were supported by the hope of secular gain and a spirit of adventure, the others were borne up by their love for immortal souls, and the hope of waving the banner of salvation along the shores of the Columbia and the Pacific, and swelling the army of the faithful among the wilds of Oregon. We might dwell on the moral grandeur of the enterprise, but it is our business simply to record facts; we leave it to others to expatiate upon them.

This seems to be a suitable place for explaining what might lead to a false impression. In the foregoing account the Flathead Indians seem to be spoken of as a single tribe, which might convey to the reader an idea that the importance of the object was hardly sufficient to justify such unwonted exertion; but the name of Flathead* is common to

* The name of Flathead, as is known to many of our readers, is taken from the singular shape of the skull, not flattened on the top, but tapering towards the crown, both before and behind, into something of a wedge-like form. The process of effecting this is graphically described by Washington Irving in his *Astoria*, vol. i., p. 93: "The infant is laid in a wooden trough by way of cradle. The end on which the head reposes is higher than the rest. A padding is placed on the forehead of the infant, with a piece of bark above it, and is pressed down by cords which pass through holes on each side of the trough. As the tightening of the padding and the pressing of the head to the board is (are) gradual, the

numerous tribes inhabiting the shore of the Pacific Ocean south of the Columbia River. These tribes number not less than ten thousand souls. But in addition to these are the Nez Percés, or Chopunnish Indians, who were also concerned in the deputation. They reside along the River Lewis, about the mouth of the Kooskotskee, and include seven thousand more. According to the estimate made by Lewis and Clarke in their travels, there are about sixty different tribes inhabiting this vast region, numbering in all not less than eighty thousand human beings. Perhaps even this is below the truth, since it is very probable that many tribes escaped the knowledge of the travellers.

But this is not the only important aspect of this interesting mission. That extensive region has long been the seat of various establishments engaged in the fur-trade, and some insulated colonies for agricultural objects. In these the whites have intermarried with the natives, so that a motley race is rising up of semi-barbarians. Having among them, to some extent, the elements of civilization, they will no doubt multiply; so that there is no faint prospect of that country, abounding, as it does, in everything to tempt cupidity, becoming, at no distant day, a populous and productive region. The influence of the whites upon the aborigines in the vicinity of the settlements has, as may well be supposed, been highly pernicious, and the Gospel provides the only means of their rescue from degradation and ruin. In other parts the Indians were represented as unusually moral, mild, docile, and accessible. In every point of view, therefore, this enterprise presented very great claims upon Christian philanthropy.

We shall, in this place, introduce a brief history of Dr.

process is said not to be attended with much pain. The appearance of the infant, however, while in this state of compression, is whimsically hideous, and 'its little black eyes,' we are told, 'being forced out by the tightness of the bandages, resemble those of a mouse choked in a trap.' About a year's pressure is sufficient to produce the desired effect, at the end of which time the child emerges from its bandages a complete flathead, and continues so through life." Mr. Irving adds, that this distinction "has something in it of aristocratical significance, like the crippling of the feet of the Chinese ladies of quality. At any rate, it is a sign of freedom. No slave is permitted to bestow this enviable deformity upon his child; all the slaves, therefore, are roundheads."

Fisk's participation in the Calvinistic Controversy. It commenced somewhat earlier than this, and continued until 1835; but we have delayed noticing it until now, and shall here present it without interruption.

The sermon on Predestination had been two years before the public, and had reached its third edition before any very serious notice was taken of it. "After the third edition was announced," says our subject, "there were several passing acrimonious censures in some Calvinistic periodicals, which did not affect the merits of the question,"* and therefore were not answered. At length, however, an opponent appeared in the person of the Rev. Mr. Tyler, of Middletown, who published a discourse obviously, though not professedly, in opposition to it. But its propositions were so indeterminate as scarcely to admit of argument: for what dispute on election can be maintained with one who defines it "the eternal purpose of God to renew, sanctify, and save *every man whom he wisely can*, and no others?"

In 1831, a writer appeared in the columns of the Connecticut Observer over the signature of Truth. He complained bitterly of what he was pleased to denominate the misrepresentations of the sermon, and even implicated the author's character as a "gentleman and a Christian." The communication bore the aspect of a challenge, and even "dared" the author of the sermon to reiterate certain specified statements. In his reply he says, "And now, Mr. Editor, not because your correspondent has 'dared' me to it in the taunting manner of a knight-errant seeking an adventure, but to bring this matter to a fair trial and a just decision before the public, I have thrown into distinct propositions the statements in my sermon which have given so much offence, not only to your correspondent, but, as I am informed, to many other Predestinarians, both of the clergy and of the laity; and if any responsible person or persons will, in any suitable public way, attempt to sustain the opposite of these propositions, I will, so far as I am able, support them; and if I fail in the proof, I will acknowledge my mistake, and do what I can to counteract my error. If any or all of these

* Calvinistic Controversy.

statements shall be sustained by credible testimony or fair reasoning, I shall be willing to leave it to the good sense and piety of those concerned to correct the evils." Then follows seven distinct propositions, which we need not insert, as, in form or in fact, they are contained in the sermon on Predestination, and are discussed in the papers on the Calvinistic Controversy, which have been for some years before the public. This article was first published in the Connecticut Observer, and copied into the Christian Advocate and Journal.

Opponents now became numerous. In addition to the Rev. Mr. Tyler and the Connecticut Observer, already mentioned, the Quarterly Christian Spectator, the Rev. David Metcalf, of Lebanon, Connecticut, the Boston Telegraph, the New-York Evangelist, and I know not how many more, entered the arena of contest. The article in the Christian Spectator, from the pen of the Rev. Professor Fitch, was ably written, ingenious, dignified, and courteous.* Mr.

* The general scope of this article is to show that Dr. Fisk confounded the fact of Predestination with the solution of the fact as held by some Calvinists; and that the fact is true, though the solution on which Dr. Fisk's arguments are based is false.

This is certainly ingenious; but, unfortunately for its success, it was incumbent on the reviewer to prove that Dr. Fisk's was not the identical solution of Calvin and of the Calvinistic formularies. This, we think, he has hardly done. The reviewer shows that he, and many who are called Calvinists, do not hold this view of Predestination; that, in fact, their view of that doctrine is essentially Arminian. But, after all, this proves no more than that, if their theory is what Dr. Fisk did not aim at, then he did not hit it. But this affords no shield to others; and, indeed, the reviewer himself admits that some, at least, do hold to the theory opposed in the sermon, and frankly acknowledges that they are effectually answered in it.

Yet the reviewer seems hardly clear in distinguishing his theory from that of the Genevan divine; for while the latter says, as quoted by Dr. Fisk, "Adam fell, not only by the *permission*, but also by the *appointment* of God: He not only *foresaw* that Adam would fall, but also *ordained* that he should fall;" the former deliberately states his proposition on Predestination thus: "God determined that the events which take place should take place in the very manner in which they do, and for the very ends." It seems to us impossible to reconcile this with the solution of Predestination given in the review.

The reviewer makes a distinction between "election unto holiness" and "election to salvation;" affirming that the former only is unconditional, while he predicates conditionality of the latter.* But, unfortunately for his cause, the

* See Christian Spectator, vol. iii., for 1831, p. 619.

Metcalfe, who came out in a pamphlet* of forty-eight pages, was of a different character. His manner was arrogant and dogmatical. He seemed to think that the game was entirely in his own hands, and that he had now only to bring his opponent to his knee, and deal out terms at discretion. In view of the proposition made by Dr. Fisk, as given in the preceding paragraph, Mr. Metcalf demanded that he should make "a public acknowledgment of his errors;" and farther asserts, "if, after he shall receive these letters, remembering also what is said in the Christian Spectator's review of his sermon, he shall allow another copy of it to be printed, I think he will find it difficult to convince any intelligent candid man that he is not guilty of breaking the ninth commandment." This language is altogether too supercilious to be used towards an equal, and is especially improper, considering that, except what little modicum of credit is given to Professor Fitch in the passing allusion to his article in the Christian Spectator, the demand was made on the score of

doctrine of infallible perseverance ties the two together so closely as to neutralize this distinction. Moreover, how will this view agree with the authorized exposition of election? At the first passage to which I open in the Confession of Faith, I find these words: "Those of mankind *that are predestinated unto life*, God, before the foundation of the world was laid, according to his eternal and immutable purpose, and the secret counsel and good pleasure of his will, *hath chosen in Christ, unto everlasting glory*, out of his mere free grace and love, without any foresight of faith or good works, or perseverance in either of them, or any other thing in the creature as conditions or causes moving him thereunto." And in the answer to the thirteenth question in the Larger Catechism, we have these words: "God, *by an eternal and immutable decree*, out of his mere love, for the praise of his glorious grace, to be manifested in due time, hath elected some angels to glory, and, in Christ, *hath chosen some men to eternal life and the means thereof*," &c. Here the election to salvation is stated as prior to the election to holiness, and the latter as the consequence rather than as the condition of the former; for "some men are elected unto eternal life and the means thereof."

For farther observations on the subject, we refer the reader to Dr. Fisk's first number of the Calvinistic Controversy.

* Mr. Metcalf desired to have his letters published in the Christian Advocate and Journal. But as they were in reply to the whole sermon instead of the particular propositions on which Dr. Fisk had challenged debate, and as the sermon was never published in the Advocate, the editors declined their insertion. They were then published, like the sermon, in pamphlet. It will be seen afterward that a proposition was made to publish Mr. Metcalf's letters in that paper, together with any subsequent discussions, provided some extensively-circulated Calvinistic paper would insert Dr. Fisk's sermon, and such discussions as were, or might be, consequent upon it. This was fair.

his own publication. It is not an uncommon thing for a combatant, when he "girdeth on his harness, to boast himself as he that putteth it off;" but it not unfrequently leads to deeper mortification. We ought, however, in justice to Mr. Metcalf, to say, that during the progress of the controversy he addressed a note to Dr. Fisk, requesting him to hasten his work, inquiring into some things not entirely satisfactory to him, and expressing a hope that they might yet establish an identity of views upon some of the points in debate. It was expressed in a manner altogether unexceptionable, at once courteous, liberal, and Christianlike. The deviations from propriety in the pamphlet must therefore be accredited to that unguarded spirit which controversy too frequently engenders, even in persons in other respects wise and good.

The articles in the Boston Telegraph ran through ten numbers of the paper, filling in all about twenty-two columns. The writer signed himself Timothy. He is of an entirely different school from Mr. Metcalf and the Christian Spectator; for, while these endeavoured to bring Arminianism and New School Calvinism upon the same ground, the other maintained the plain old-fashioned theory of irresistible grace, particular election, and positive fore-ordination. Nay, so honest and downright is the author of the articles, that he freely admits that God is the author of sin. The passage is curious. In answering the assertion of his opponent, that the doctrine of Predestination makes God the author of sin, after giving several senses to the word author, such as the "doer or perpetrator of a thing," the "approver as well as doer of a thing," and, lastly, the "efficient cause," he thus proceeds: "Now I am willing to admit, that those Scriptures which teach that God has decreed the sinful conduct of men, do imply that he is the efficient cause of moral evil. For his own glory and the greatest good, he said, '*Let there be sin, and there was sin.*' The above objection, when stripped of all ambiguity, means only that 'God worketh all things (without exception) after the counsel of his own will.'" We insert this extract only to show the writer's creed; but it is not necessary to enlarge upon his views. The papers are written with good temper and considerable ability; but this

aspect of the controversy is not exciting much attention at the present period.

It was now high time to couch the lance and address himself to conflict. The array against him was formidable, and fearful the odds; yet he was not disposed to shun the encounter. His first article was published in May, 1832, in answer to the *Christian Spectator*; and his second in October following, in reply to Mr. Metcalf. This gentleman had thrown out a charge against the Methodist clergy of wishing to keep their people from reading Calvinistic publications. To meet this promptly, Dr. Fisk makes the following proposition:

“And, in the mean time, as a farther proof that the charge is unfounded, I will, Messrs. Editors, with your consent and approbation, make a proposition to Mr. Metcalf. It is certainly desirable that both Calvinists and Methodists should hear *both sides*. Mr. M. seems very desirous to enlighten the Methodists. This is very well. But we also wish to enlighten the Calvinists. To accomplish this, the discussions on both sides should be put into the hands of the people on both sides. If, then, some reputable and extensively-circulated Calvinistic periodical will publish my sermon, and the discussion which *has* arisen or *may* arise out of it on both sides, the *Christian Advocate and Journal* will publish Mr. M.’s letters, and the discussions which shall follow, provided, always, that it shall be submitted to the respective editors whether the pieces are written in respectful and becoming style and language; and provided, also, that the Calvinistic editor shall, by consenting to this arrangement, be considered as thereby acknowledging that Mr. Metcalf is a suitable man to manage the controversy in behalf of the Calvinists, and that you, Messrs. Editors, by consenting to the arrangement, will thereby consent that you are willing to trust the controversy in my hands, to be managed in behalf of the Methodists. To give an opportunity for the Calvinistic periodical to be prepared, I shall wait a reasonable time, when, if the offer is not complied with, I shall want the privilege, perhaps, of occupying the columns of the *Advo-*

cate by the insertion of a few numbers touching the present Calvinistic controversy, both as relates to their own differences, and also as relates to the general question between them and us. Respectfully yours,

W. FISK.

" Wesleyan University, September 27, 1832."

This was perfectly fair. It would bring Dr. Fisk and the Christian Advocate on equal ground with their opponents. But it seems there were serious objections to this arrangement. The editor of the New-York Evangelist shall be allowed to state them :

" There is one condition he exacts, however, which we think impracticable : it is, that some person should be designated by a sort of common suffrage as the champion of Calvinism. Now the truth is, Calvinists, as a class, are rather remarkable for thinking for themselves ; and, of course, while there are great principles on which, as a class, they all agree, there are other things which will be held or stated differently by different minds. Consequently, we can, each of us, defend ourselves, and defend Calvinists as a class, notwithstanding each one may think his fellow holds some errors ; and therefore, in his contest with Calvinism, Dr. Fisk must assume to himself the responsibility of selecting those doctrinal points and modes of statement which distinguish *Calvinists as a class* ; and when he has found these principles, we hope he will confute or embrace them."*

This proposition, therefore, not being accepted, our author furnished for the Christian Advocate and Journal a succession of articles, the last of which was published April 3d, 1835. They were read with great avidity ; and such was the interest felt in them, that the Book Agents, soon after their completion, issued them in a distinct volume. It sold extensively ; and, after Dr. Fisk's return from Europe, they were republished in an improved form, the stereotype plates having been destroyed in the conflagration of the Book Concern in the winter of 1835.

If the gratification of your friends and the disturbance of your foes be alike concessions to superior power, our author

* Quoted from the Calvinistic Controversy.

received ample compliment on his Calvinistic Controversy. We may learn something of a general's estimate of a hostile army by his manner of preparing for the encounter, the number and quality of the forces he brings into the field, and the like. After the array against him which we have mentioned above, it would have been useless and inconsistent to deny that he was an opponent of no ordinary power. Accordingly, we find Timothy, in the introduction of his article in the Boston Telegraph, holding this language: "This discourse has already received an uncommon share of public attention. The ability with which the sermon is written, and the celebrity of the author, have given it a pretty extensive circulation; and it is thought by many that Dr. Fisk has, in this discourse, put the subject of Predestination and Election forever at rest, and that Arminianism has gained a complete and decisive victory." On the other hand, from the friends of his own cause our author received numerous and highly flattering testimonials, both by private communication and the public journals. Nor were these confined to the members of his own church. The ensuing lines we extract from an article, in which, under the signature of "A clergyman of another denomination," an unknown writer speaks of one of Dr. Fisk's addresses on Temperance:

"May I also say that I have been very much pleased with the doctor's papers on the Calvinistic Controversy. In truth, I have seldom read anything more logical, argumentative, clear, and conclusive. I should like much to see them in a popular form. May the blessing of the Lord be with him."

But the highest commendation of the work is found in the interest with which the successive numbers were read, the demand for them in a separate volume, and the rapidity and extent of its circulation.

Dr. Fisk's work on the Calvinistic Controversy was of great service to the cause of truth. The system of the Genevan reformer had gone through so many convolutions as nearly to have slipped through the pincers in which Wesley and Fletcher had held it. The ground it assumed was so new, that the arguments heretofore employed against it were of little avail. Besides, it now claimed close affinity

with Arminianism, and adopted much of its phraseology and mode of preaching. Its advocates themselves seemed to think that they had discovered a method of constructing an Arminian edifice on a Calvinian basis. Some of our own people were deceived by these appearances, and really thought that Calvinists had shot the gulf. Before Dr. Fisk entered upon the work, several attempts had been made to arrest the evil; especially Dr. Bangs had published two volumes against Hopkinsianism; and several writers had appeared in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and other periodicals. These all had their use, but did not meet the present aspects of the case, or were too local and partial to cover the entire ground. Dr. Fisk's work just supplied the desideratum. It assailed the vulnerable points of the system with masterly skill. Full of thought and information, adapted to the times, written rather in a popular than in a scholastic style, clear, natural, fluent, and engaging, it interested all classes. The effect was most happy. It convinced some, at least, of the errors it opposed. One letter especially is before me, from a young man educated in the Calvinian doctrines, who was delivered by it from a dark and agitated state of mind, and peacefully established in the views of Wesley. He afterward graduated at the Wesleyan University, and is now a promising licentiate in the ministry.

But the controversy had the most beneficial influence on the Church. It exposed to view the real difference between the two theories; it settled several contested points among ourselves; it proved that, though some Calvinists, in their anxiety to avoid the offensive features of the system, had, in effect, explained it all away, yet they were as far as ever from Wesleyanism, and, in some points, far less evangelical than Calvin, especially in regard to human depravity, conversion, and regeneration. Since this time, to whatever it may be ascribed, the Church has enjoyed repose; our opponents, if not convinced, are at least silent; and the sword of controversy rests undisturbed in its scabbard.*

* The Reverend Francis Hodgson's acute and searching work is the only exception of any consequence that we are aware of to the above remarks. This

It ought to be observed, however, that the articles were written at intervals, as the author could secure time from his numerous and imperative engagements, and sent to press as they were ready. This did not permit so minute a revision and correction as they, no doubt, would have received had the publication been delayed until all were finished. The author felt these disadvantages, and modestly offers his apology in the advertisement.

In closing this portion of our work, we feel happy in being able to say, that though it was our author's lot to come into collision with many excellent as well as able men, he did not allow his heart to be alienated from them by a mere difference of opinion. So far as his opponents exercised the appropriate Christian tempers, he still regarded them as brethren, while he had many personal friends in different branches of the Church of Christ. Thus he exemplified the saying of the elder Mason, that "one true Christian differs from another without breach of charity, as friends love one another, though in different garbs." He frequently remarked, "I do not love my neighbour less because I love my own family more." It has been said that our dislike of our opponents is in the direct ratio, not of their distance from our own theory, but of their propinquity to it. It was not so with Dr. Fisk. He properly discriminated between the degrees of error, and loved those most who were nearest what he understood to be the truth. He adhered to the only true basis of Christian concord :

"In necessariis unitas ;

"In non-necessariis lenitas ;

"In omnibus charitas."

goes farther into the subject than Dr. Fisk intended, and has done much towards setting the doctrines of New Divinity, as it is called, in their proper light.

CHAPTER XV.

Official Conduct.—Disinterestedness.—Revival.—Sickness.—Death of Judge Deming.—Education.—Letters.—Theological and Missionary Education.—Future Punishment believed by the Jews.—Writings and Literature.—Mode of Instruction.—Intercourse with the Students.

DR. FISK's labours in the University were all the time steadily increasing. The number of students was now about one hundred, but the care and responsibility had increased in a very disproportionate ratio. This arose partly from the infancy of the institution, and partly from its peculiar organization. The system adopted was much more perplexing to the faculty than the old plan; it required a much stricter personal vigilance; it brought the students into closer contact with the officers, especially with the president, and, of course, made larger draughts upon his time. Besides, Dr. Fisk was always opposed to governing by a system of statutes and precedents. The government of a college is, in its essential elements, paternal; and in a family it would be ruinous to govern by a minute system of inflexible law. The mode of treatment must be varied, to meet the variety of characters and dispositions composing the household. Thus our subject believed that, while there should be certain general principles, as invariable as possible, the president of a college should exercise his discretion, to a greater extent than is usually done, in the treatment of different cases and persons. This system has important advantages, but it renders the situation of a presiding officer much more difficult. To carry it out fully and safely requires great discrimination, tact, and promptitude; but Dr. Fisk possessed these in an eminent degree, and hence he succeeded to an extent to which few would have done in the same situation.

His control over the students was almost unbounded. He commanded to an uncommon extent the two affections absolutely essential to success in his position, reverence and attachment. A word from him was generally enough. If

he had occasion to correct any little impropriety by public remarks in the chapel, it was done in such a manner as rarely to need repeating. He was very seldom severe, occasionally sarcastic, often witty and humorous, just so as to turn the laugh upon the offending person ; generally he was mild and gentle, but never harsh nor angry. His perfect self-command always sustained his dignity of character, and commanded respect. Cases of irregularity would of course occur ; but he would talk to the offender in such a manner as generally to subdue him, and often bring him to penitence. The number dismissed was remarkably small. He was not accustomed to mention the faults or misdemeanours of the students out of college, even to his own family ; and when asked the reason of his reserve, he replied, "I wish the young gentlemen to reinstate themselves in my confidence, and I give them the opportunity ; but if I mention it abroad, and they hear of it, they will not make the effort." Indeed, the students regarded him as a friend. They went to him for advice, for sympathy, and for aid in their difficulties with perfect freedom and confidence. When sick, he not only prayed with and for them, but attended to their wants and comfort, and ministered to them with his own hands. These things consumed a large share of his time, but it secured his object, the safety and success of the institution.

We have already had proof of his disinterestedness. No man could have had less regard to lucre ; he did not even receive what was proper and necessary to meet the demands of his station. On accepting the presidency of the Wesleyan University, he refused a part of the salary offered him by the trustees, not, however, from contracted views, but from prudential reasons ; but he found it inadequate, and received afterward an addition, but never more than a moderate sufficiency for his unavoidable expenses.

But his disinterestedness appeared in a form still more unequivocal and elevated, in his superiority, namely, to the claims of reputation. He laboured with a single eye, with a pure intention. He did not ask, How will it affect myself ? but Will it do good ? When he came to Middletown, some one advised him not to preach often, lest familiarity

should abate the interest in him, but to reserve himself for great or important occasions. But to such worldly wisdom he was an utter stranger. Such arts of self-seeking and reputation hunting he never practised. They were beneath him. Where there was need of labourers, he rushed to the field, no matter whether the congregation was large and imposing, or small and obscure. Some of his ablest sermons, of almost overwhelming power, were preached in little village churches, in country school-houses, and to rustic audiences. Nor was he sparing in his labours. When at home, he seldom spent an idle Sabbath. Though he never used notes in the pulpit, yet he often preached on an emergency, and frequently was so engrossed with other duties as to have no leisure to prepare himself properly for the pulpit. If by this course he did not attain to quite the eminence he might have done otherwise as a brilliant pulpit orator, he gained, what is much more dear to the devout spirit of a true minister of Christ, the entire affection and confidence of the Christian public.

Dr. Fisk always felt the importance of maintaining an ascendant religious influence in the institution. Nor was it an inactive and fruitless conviction. He spared no pains to foster it. He frequently preached to the students in the chapel before regular service was established. In his private conversations and reproofs for delinquencies, he gave, though always with judgment and good taste, a suitable prominence to religious considerations. Such appeals, sustained by his own personal example, gave an elevation to his views and a weight to his admonitions that rendered them more effective. An illustration of his solicitude to secure an influential religious example it is thus in our power to present. It was always, as we have elsewhere remarked, particularly injurious to him to rise, especially to be in the open air, in the morning long before breakfast ; it invariably aggravated his cough and expectoration. Yet when he came to Middletown, he commenced the practice of attending morning prayers in the chapel at six o'clock ; and it was only at the urgent solicitation of the professors that he consented to desist. When he had thus sufficiently proved his anxiety to

fulfil every duty, and secured the influence it gave him, he yielded to entreaty, and ever after regularly officiated in the daily service of the chapel only in the evening.

Of the students in the Wesleyan University, a large proportion, generally more than one half, were professors of religion, and many of them of more mature age and character than is usual in colleges; yet, notwithstanding his exertions, the president often lamented the comparative unfruitfulness of his ministerial labours, and had "great searchings of heart" as to the reason. But in the spring of 1834, a protracted meeting was held in the church in town, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Bartholomew Creagh. Dr. Fisk felt it to be a time of interest and of great importance. The evening the meeting commenced, he gathered his family around the domestic altar, and having read a portion of Scripture, he observed, "I have never laboured so long anywhere as here, without special evidence that God owned my labours by the outpouring of his Holy Spirit. Can it be that by this God means to indicate that I am not in the path of duty? I do not feel that my own soul has lost any of its fervour; but the University—the souls in the University!"

"In prayer," says Mrs. Fisk, from whom I have this incident, "in prayer he was very fervent. One expression I well remember: 'I ask not to be the honoured instrument; only give me a token that thou dost own the University.'" His prayer was answered, and he had the supreme satisfaction, in a few weeks, to forward the annexed communication

To the Editors of the Christian Advocate and Journal.

"Wesleyan University, March 12, 1834.

"DEAR BRETHREN,

"I have the inexpressible happiness of communicating to you the cheering intelligence of a blessed work of grace in the Wesleyan University. This is the first general revival we have had since the institution was opened. Although we have had a great proportion of pious students from the beginning, still those who entered in an unconverted state have generally remained so, and in some instances the piety of the professing students had evidently declined. This was,

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to us, a matter of great grief and special solicitude. The University was established by the Church for the good of the world, and especially for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause; and to experience no spiritual refreshings for more than two years seemed peculiarly inauspicious. The young men were moral, regular in their habits, remarkably correct in their general deportment, active in the cause of temperance, of missions, and of other benevolent enterprises; but all this, commendable as it was, did not come up to the important standard, personal holiness of heart and life. But God had not forgotten us. He has at length visited us in great mercy. A few of our students are absent. Of those who are present, but very few, perhaps but three or four, can be found who profess not to have obtained peace in believing, or are not earnestly pressing after it. The work, in most cases, seems to be thorough and deep. So great has been the interest for the last two weeks, we have been obliged partially, and some days almost wholly, to suspend our regular college duties, and our college edifices have resounded with the voice of prayer and praise.

"Although all who are acquainted with our literary institutions know that here, as elsewhere, there are snares and temptations for the inexperienced youth—so that we rejoice with trembling—yet I cannot but believe that a goodly number of young men have here, within a few days, been brought to a state of feeling and a course of action that will be productive of lasting advantage to themselves, and, through them, to others. What an interesting consideration is this! and how strongly does it recommend our literary institutions to the patronage of the Church. This is a point to which I strongly suspect the attention of the Church has not been sufficiently directed. Let one fact speak on this subject. To say nothing of the advantages of our seminaries to those who are already pious, and of the moral and religious influence that has been thrown over others, I have the means of knowing that about three sevenths of all the students of this University have become pious either *here*, or at one of our academies before they entered here. Thus religion and literature have met together in the very cases in which there is

the greatest hope for the cause of God—in young men who are training and girding themselves for the great enterprise of subduing the world to Christ. And will our friends look on and see our institutions languish for the want of the necessary funds, when God is showering salvation upon them? And will our pious members hesitate to send their children here for fear of injury to their souls, when it is here that God blesses them? Brethren, inquire what is duty in this matter.

“I will just observe, in conclusion, that the work in the University has been in connexion with a gracious revival in the town, of which our beloved brother Creagh, preacher in charge, will doubtless give a more particular account.

“W. FISK.”

By his labours during this season of uncommon interest, Dr. Fisk's health was greatly prostrated. It was still farther affected by an excursion, immediately after the meeting closed, to New-London, to solicit funds for the institution, and still more by the arduous duties devolving on him at the New-England Conference, which took place soon after. On his return home, though really unfit to be out of bed, he insisted on fulfilling an appointment, which he had sent on before him, to preach in the chapel to the students. This succession of tasks upon his strength was entirely too much. He was now seized with a violent attack of peripneumony, which confined him to his chamber for several weeks: yet he could not desist from work. During his illness he received unpleasant intelligence of some kind from Wilbraham Academy that required prompt attention. Unable to sit up in bed, yet supported by pillows, Mrs. Fisk guiding his emaciated hand, he penned an answer to the communication. Such was the spirit in which he lived. Take another instance: Before he was entirely recovered from this illness, the annual examination of the students of the University took place. Too feeble to walk, he would be carried up morning and afternoon each day, attending an hour or so at a time, as he was able to bear it. On Mrs. Fisk's expostulating with him about it, he replied, “I wish to know for myself the standing both of professors and students; and at this

time I feel called upon to use all the exertion I can make, and then cast myself on the providential care of God." But such exposures of health and life, though they arise from a lofty sense of duty and noble elements of character, trespass on the verge of prudence, and are not commended for imitation; but our subject seemed to go on the theory that he would not hold any situation in which he could not do all that was necessary to give it efficiency. He acted on the principle that "That life is long which answers life's great end." From the effects of this illness Mrs. Fisk thinks he never entirely recovered.

In the summer of 1834 Dr. Fisk met with a severe affliction in the death of his friend the Hon. Benjamin Franklin Deming. The attachment between these, in many respects, kindred spirits, was similar to that of David and Jonathan. The previous year Judge Deming was elected a member of Congress, and consequently spent the winter in Washington. While there his health failed, and on the adjournment of Congress he proceeded homeward as far as Saratoga Springs, where he purposed spending a few days, in hope of deriving aid from the water. But, alas! no Hygeian spring could avail. He took to his bed, and died far from home, surrounded by strangers. But he was a devout Christian, had retained his religious confidence and fervour unimpaired through the trying scenes of a Congressional career, and died in humble reliance upon the Saviour, and in full assurance of a blissful immortality. Dr. Fisk received the account of his friend's departure while on a journey to visit his parents at Lyndon. He was deeply affected by it. "He never afterward," says Mrs. Fisk, "heard Judge Deming's name without painful emotion. More than once, when I alluded to him, he said, 'The loss of Judge Deming has made a vacuum in my heart which can never be filled. On earth to me his place is blank. But it is all well. I love to think of him in heaven.'"

From Lyndon he addressed the subjoined letter, though still very feeble, to the bereaved widow of his friend, residing at Danville:

"Lyndon, August 6, 1834.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"I had purposed to visit you before I returned, but poor health and want of time will prevent. I need not tell you how sensibly I felt the loss of your lamented husband, and how my heart bled, not only for myself, but also for you. I feared the burden would be more than you could bear; but how happy am I to learn from Mr. Cook that our heavenly Father, who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, has graciously sustained you in this hour of trial. I desire to be most thankful in your behalf for this special favour. May this affliction, my dear sister, be the means of your entire sanctification to that God that you profess to serve. This is, indeed, a great loss—an irreparable loss; but then it may be a great blessing—the greatest blessing, perhaps, that you ever experienced.

"You have now a double duty to perform for your dear children; may you have wisdom to direct. If I can afford you any assistance as counsel in the education of your children, you may command my services.

"We had not heard of your dear husband's death until I left home, but I wrote to Mrs. F. immediately. I need not tell you she will sympathize with you deeply, and will pray for you.

"My kind regards to your dear children, and believe me your affectionate and sympathizing friend and Christian brother,
W. FISK."

The cause of education in the Methodist community had now received an impulse which was felt to the utmost bounds of the connexion. Yet it touched the more prominent members rather than vivified the whole body. Dr. Fisk rejoiced greatly at what was done, but still lamented that it was so little compared with our obligations. Speaking of the slow progress of the cause in general, and in particular of the difficulty of obtaining funds for the Wesleyan University, he remarked, in a letter to the Reverend Chauncey Richardson,* "Something must be done, or we are thrown into the back-ground as a denomination. Our people are not half awake.

* Now president of the college at Rutersville, Texas.

Their contributions for this great object are as meager as the leakage of a miser's purse." Again: "We must keep this subject alive until we wake up a spirit of enterprise that will sleep no more. Religion and education, bound together in their native affinities, and their operations in unison, must save the Church and must save the nation."

His views were enlarged and comprehensive. From his peculiar position, he had abundant opportunity of learning the condition and wants of the Western and Southern States in regard to education and intelligence; and deeply was his heart affected by the pictures often presented to his view. From every direction letters came thronging to him, chiefly from the West, beseeching him to aid them, and especially to furnish them with suitable instructors. These things induced him to write a spirited article, inserted in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, under date of April 11th, 1834, headed "Supply of Teachers for the West," which brought an article from another hand, signed "A Voice from the South," claiming equal consideration in that section. Among his acquaintances and the students of the University he used great exertion, and many are the teachers sent through his instrumentality into those regions. Many, perhaps I might say most, of the colleges and academies in the country under Methodist influence have been furnished with instructors, in whole or in part, from the Wesleyan University, including two in the Faculty of Victoria College, recently established in Upper Canada, to say nothing of the number engaged in private schools or as domestic teachers. Indeed, it is not known that a single graduate of the institution is otherwise than honourably engaged in some useful occupation. Thus Dr. Fisk so far has had his wishes fulfilled. True, part of these results have followed since his death, but we still may justly lay them to the credit of his influence and exertions.

The spirit and motives which actuated him may be still farther seen in an extract from a letter to Miss Susan Brewer, now Mrs. Thomas, of Louisiana, who went out under his recommendation to Alabama as a teacher, and is well known and esteemed for her labours in various institutions in the South in that capacity. The letter was written August 10,

1831, but I reserved it for this place in consequence of its appropriateness to the present topic.

“I wish we could fill that new country with sound pious teachers. Indeed, I want to send out enough to set the world on fire! I have *done* educating youths for *THEMSELVES*; my sole object, I think, will be, hereafter, to educate all I can get *FOR THE WORLD*. I can do but little myself, but perhaps I may be able to stir up the fire of a few young hearts, who will burn their way through this dark, wicked world! My heart burns in this work, and the fervour increases from year to year. O, what a work lies before us! Who is on the Lord’s side? Would to God I could train up an army to march against the powers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places! See the opening doors for doing good all over the world! And yet the Church sleeps on, and the rising generation are educated for self! *poor little self*! Never! never shall we see the world renewed until this blighting mildew, this withering curse, is removed from the Church.”

To Mr. George H. Round, a graduate of the Wesleyan University.

“January 12, 1835.

“That you are employed profitably to yourself and to the world, is the only recompense you can receive for your past toils, and the only recompense you can *make* to the world for the privileges you have enjoyed and do still enjoy in it. So far as the human race are concerned in their relations to each other, we are all mutually debtors and creditors, and the only way to keep the account balanced is to go to the extent of our ability both in obtaining and communicating. The more we obtain, the more we can communicate; and the more we can communicate, the more we can obtain. This is the circulation of the life-blood of society. When it is complete, the state of society is perfect; when it is checked, society suffers, but not so much as the individual member in whom the suspension occurs. Wo be to him! he perishes *in* and *by* his own accumulations. The healthful action of his own

soul ceases ; mortification takes place ; and, although he struggles a while in this violence to the law of his being, the action is morbid and painful to himself, and he finally dies, a corrupt and offensive appendage of the social system. Rather than die such a social and moral death, let us endure all kinds of labour and privation. Man may cast me off and persecute me, but he never can destroy my earthly happiness until he checks the current of benevolence in my heart, and robs me of the privilege of loving him and serving him. Can he ever do this ?”

Progression in whatever he was engaged was Dr. Fisk's continual aim ; stagnation was his utter abhorrence. From the first establishment of the Wesleyan University, he meditated a carrying out of the full provisions of the charter. With this view he desired to see erected in the institution a department of law, and another of medicine. With a view to the former, he wrote to Thomas Chapman, Esq., the liberal benefactor of the University, to ascertain whether he would accept a professorship, and organize a law department. But, from his professional engagements, joined to the health of his family, he was induced to decline. He also wrote to his excellent friend, Dr. Sewall, of Washington (D. C.), asking his advice as to the establishment of a medical college, and requesting his services as professor. He received a very judicious and candid answer, entirely discouraging the project. The reasons were chiefly the great expense and risk attending it, and the danger of multiplying such institutions too fast ; the greater advantages of large cities for pursuing the medical studies, especially surgery, and the superiority of a few institutions on an extended scale, over a great number feebly sustained. These views as to the medical school were decisive. A department of law, however, has been recently added, under the supervision of the Hon. William L. Storrs.

Another topic belongs to this period of our history, on which it may be expected that our subject's views would be presented. The spirit of improvement which had been awakened in our ministry had led to the agitation of the Theological School Question. From his ardent devotion to the cause of general education, and his desire to elevate the

standard of ministerial attainments, many entertained no doubt that Dr. Fisk would cordially advocate such institutions. But he had strong objections to them, partly as opposed to the feelings of the Methodist community, and partly as incompatible with our organization and economy. Yet he thought that arrangements might be made, in connexion with our colleges, for the improvement of young ministers, answering very nearly to the Theological Institution of our British brethren. But we are enabled to lay before the reader his views, pretty fully expressed in two letters on the subject, addressed, one to the Rev. Martin P. Parks, now of the P. E. Church, and recently elected Bishop of Alabama, and the other to the Rev. Thomas Stringfield. The reader will see that there is some difference in the date, but as they relate to the same subject, we introduce them together. The former was written when the subject was just broached; in the latter his views are more matured.

"Middletown, December 17, 1833.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your esteemed favour arrived as I was on the eve of my departure to visit Captain Wyeth in reference to the Oregon Mission, an account of which you have doubtless seen in the Christian Advocate and Journal. My absence, and the bringing up of arrears in my official duties since my return, have delayed a reply until now; and, now that I have taken up my pen, I know not what to say. I can indeed respond to your statements, that, as a whole, our ministry is in many respects greatly deficient; and, what is to me a matter of deeper and more fearful interest, that deficiency will be felt more in twenty years than it now is, from the fact that, while society in general is advancing, we receive ministers on our old standards, and educate them in the old way; and hence shall raise up men of precisely *the same character*, to operate upon a material which, by the changes in society, is of a very different character. The odds against us, moreover, in future, will be the greater, from the fact, that while other denominations have lost nothing of their former intellectual and professional preparation, they have

gained much in zeal and industry. The zeal and industry of the Methodist preachers formerly, notwithstanding their ignorance, gave them an ascendancy in the ecclesiastical field over the ministers of other denominations, notwithstanding their knowledge. But let the latter possess *both*, and the former only retain the *one*, and they are unquestionably superseded. This is the crisis towards which we are rapidly tending. The inquiry is, How can the present and the still greater coming evil be remedied or prevented? Now if it were judged best, in abstract theory, to have theological seminaries, it would not be best to attempt their establishment at present, and that for several reasons. First. We could not command the means to establish them. Second. We could not furnish the men to take the direction and control of them. Third. An attempt to get up such institutions would raise the popular cry in our Church against all our literary institutions, and would, I fear, ruin them. There is one way, however, in which this evil may in part, at least, be remedied, and this is a method which I have practised ever since I have been concerned in our institutions. Let all the members of our colleges and academies who design entering the ministry be formed into voluntary classes, to have exercises weekly or oftener, consisting of written themes, lectures, and familiar discussions on doctrine, Biblical criticism, Church government, pastoral duties, and pulpit exercises. Let the president and such of the professors as are skilled in these topics give their services to this noble work. [Soon, perhaps, we can introduce theological professors into our colleges, and may induce many of our graduates to reside a year or two at the college after graduation, to study their profession. In this way we shall gradually introduce a change in the ministerial profession among us, which cannot fail, by direct and indirect influences, to affect the whole body. This work may be commenced *at once*. If it has not been done in your college before, you can commence it the very day you receive this suggestion, if you approve of it. If we cannot do all we would, we can do something; and every inch gained gives so much enlargement for future action; and, in time, we shall mould the public

mind to our purpose, and shall secure pecuniary means, and efficient instructors, and willing pupils."

To the Rev. Thos. Stringfield.

"Middletown, February 13, 1835.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"It is the general opinion here, I think, both among the learned and the unlearned, that our young men ought to be better instructed in theology, as well as in general science and literature, than they usually are when they enter the ministry, and better than they can be without some one to instruct them.

"But it is the general opinion with us that this instruction can be better given in the literary institutions than in any separate school: this is *decidedly* my opinion. When we see how greatly deficient we are, as a body, in the knowledge of Scripture theology, and when we see how difficult it is to get this knowledge after entering the ministry, how can I doubt, and how can any one doubt, but that they should be better educated beforehand? The old theory, you know, is, that the young men should, while on trial and while deacons, be placed with experienced fathers, who should teach them. This is what some have called the 'Old Methodist Theological Seminary.' However well this may sound in theory, you and I very well know how it *operates*. In these days of practical philosophy, it is the *working* of a principle that gives it credit. This is true in general; but I fear *we* are not such good philosophers. We call our machinery *perfect*, and have persisted *against all experience*. The fact is, and we ought to know it, the constitution and exigences of the itinerant connexion are such, that it can never take the *raw material*, and work it up to that extent and in that degree of perfection which is imperiously demanded; much less can it do it in its present condition; for the machinery which is relied upon to accomplish this is itself in so unfinished a state, that in many of its parts it is but little advanced beyond the raw material. The only question, therefore, that remains to be decided, is, How can this preparatory knowledge be best imparted? I propose our literary institutions for this object; among other reasons are the following:

"1. It will be a great saving of expense. In our literary seminaries we have the buildings, the libraries, the teachers, already prepared. To get up and support separate establishments would almost double the expense. The attempt, therefore, in the present condition of these seminaries, would be likely to ruin both.

"2. By having an experienced and well-educated minister in these seminaries, this work can be accomplished to all needful extent.

"3. It will be a saving of time to the young men, who can thus mingle the study of theology with their other pursuits. It will become a part of their miscellaneous reading; and, in hours of relaxation, of their conversation. Mind, acting upon mind, will elicit truth almost incidentally, and there will always be *one* to whom they might appeal to settle all doubtful questions.

"4. In this way, too, we shall not be so much in danger of carrying speculation too far, so as to make the instruction result in *dogmatism*, and lead to the *spinning out of new theories*, as is the case sometimes in theological seminaries.

"5. In this way we should throw a greater amount of *salt* into our literary *fountains*, and thus get new and promising candidates for the ministry converted, perhaps.

"6. What I have here proposed is not mere theory. I have acted upon this principle, more or less, ever since I entered upon the business of education, and I have now a class of from twenty to thirty promising young men under this kind of training. I hope you will do the same in your institution. Our brethren in Virginia say they cannot take this course, because their charter and public sentiment will not permit. In that case they must take the next best way. It is not so here. I ought, however, to say, that the theological instruction which we impart is not made a part of a college course; it is extra and voluntary on their part, and gratuitous on ours.

"Your affectionate brother,

W. FISK."

We have already had occasion to observe, that one object Dr. Fisk had in view, in connexion with the Wesleyan Uni-

versity, was the preparation of suitable persons for the missionary field. Of this he did not lose sight. At the session of the New-England Conference in 1833, he introduced a resolution for the appointment of a committee to digest a plan for the formation of education societies throughout the Conference. The ensuing spring he received from the Rev. John Lindsey a letter, to which he wrote the subjoined answer. It is dated March 24, 1834.

"Your letter from Andover was received this morning. With respect to the missionary department in the University, I know not what to say; I believe such a department, could it be sustained, would be of great service to the cause of missions: it would create and establish such a cause among us. As yet, we have no *missionary cause* in our Church for foreign missions. The Young Men's Missionary Society in New-York, with much labour and perseverance, got up the Liberia Mission; and a few of us, in the same way, got up, by our independent exertions, the Oregon Mission. An independent movement on the part of New-England I do not so well like, because it would be viewed with distrust by other parts; it would be construed into radicalism and the like by some. I think, however, that a missionary department in the University would accomplish the object without exciting those jealousies. If we have men raised up and prepared, who say to the bishops and to the Conference, '*I am for a foreign mission*,' then the missions will be planned and the work will be sustained.

"But how shall such a department be sustained? Or, for a preliminary question, How shall it be constituted? It must, of course, be a department for instruction preparatory to a foreign mission, for which charitable provision should be made for the poor. Hence perhaps a professorship should be established and endowed, or else a fund should be raised for the education of such young men as were destined for the mission field. The latter I should rather prefer. But can such a fund be raised? and in raising it, would not our other efforts be paralyzed? for you know we have not funds yet for the college proper. Think of these things, and write."

Dr. Fisk, at the next Conference, was chairman of the Committee on Education, while the Rev. John Lindsey was in the same relation to the Committee on Missions. Having respectively examined the subjects committed to them, the two bodies united in presenting the subjoined report to Conference. The document was written by Dr. Fisk, and signed by the chairman of each committee. It is worthy of serious perusal.

"The committee are of opinion that the two subjects, that of missionary labour and education, are nearly related to each other, and, in the present state of the Church, the two are, in fact, inseparable. It is evident, from the signs of the times, that the only embarrassment to the missionary cause, which threatens seriously to impede its progress in our Church, is the want of the proper agents to carry it on. The missionary work is somewhat peculiar, and differs from our regular work in two respects: *First*, An education suited to the particular work to which the missionary is called. We have already commenced in the foreign missionary enterprise, and calls are made upon us for an enlargement of these operations, in places where an acquaintance with other languages, and with some of the sciences and other professions, especially the profession of medicine, is indispensable. To suit these peculiarities, it is necessary that an education should be given of an appropriate character. *Secondly*, Another peculiarity in the missionary work is its identity with the cause of education. Education and the Christian religion always have been and always should be intimately connected. A minister of the Gospel that is not interested in the cause of general education is an anomaly; and, in the opinion of your committee, such a man, if he can be found, has forgotten an important part of his calling. But this applies with peculiar emphasis to the missionary work. Here not only must the missionary aid this cause collaterally and indirectly, but he must make it a part of his business to teach, or, at least, he must superintend this work as performed by others, associated with him for that express purpose. Hence the missionary himself must be prepared for the work of instruction, and in many cases must have associated with him

missionary teachers, all of whom need to be educated for the purpose. The question is, Where shall we get the men with the appropriate qualifications for this all-important enterprise? If we look into the ranks of the travelling ministry, or among those who are candidates for the itinerant connexion, we must be constrained to acknowledge that we have them not to spare from these sources; and if we look into the private ranks of the Church, we shall find—what shall we find? Men qualified for this work? Your committee believe not. We shall find, it is true, young persons of both sexes, ardent in piety, glowing in love to God and man, burning with a commendable zeal for the missionary enterprise, but altogether unprepared to prosecute this labour successfully. In proof that we have many such among us, the committee have had the testimony of other brethren from different parts of the Conference, and they know this to be a fact from personal acquaintance. It is also known that a great portion of these persons are poor, and unable to secure an education without aid. The committee have therefore agreed to report a plan, the general features of which, they are fully confident, will meet the exigences of the Church in this matter, if the members of the Conference will enter into it with unanimity and zeal; and until some plan of this kind be adopted, the committee are of opinion that the intellectual resources of the Church will never be fully developed, and rendered, to the full extent, efficient and useful in the great cause of evangelizing the world. They believe that the longer this work is delayed, the more will the cause of the Church suffer, both at home and abroad. The youth of our Church are alienated from the purposes of the Church, either into business purely secular, or into the service and under the control of others, who offer them advantages for intellectual improvement and subsequent employment which they have sought for in vain among us.

“The committee are also of opinion, that by this proposed plan the Conference may afford the most efficient aid to our literary institutions, and that, too, in a way corresponding with the original design of getting up these institutions. The primary object of general education is, as it should be,

the highest good of man in this world and the next. It is because this object has so high an import, and because it stands connected with man's highest elevation and destiny, that our Church has interested herself in the establishment and maintenance of literary institutions. These institutions need aid, especially the Wesleyan University; an institution which, while it is eminently worthy, as your committee believe, of public patronage, has strong claims upon the Conference for patronage and support. But *paying* students are as profitable for the time being to the University as money. If, therefore, the Conference should raise funds for the purposes of education at the University, they will so far strengthen and aid the institution; and if they do this in connexion with the missionary work, they will so far aid the cause of the Church directly, and hence the cause of education and religion will, by the same operation, be promoted.

"The committee might enlarge upon the wants of the Church in reference to this subject; they might say that calls have been made for missionaries and teachers in South America, and that there are increased openings in Africa; they might mention that hundreds of teachers are now called for in our new settlements, on our frontiers, and among our aborigines: calls that cannot be met until the persons are provided, and the persons cannot be provided unless they are educated.

"The committee are aware that the execution of this plan will require zeal, unanimity, and prudence. But we shall gain nothing by delay. An efficient and discreet committee should be appointed, and great care should be taken in maturing the plan and fixing the details. Let us not, however, by our fears, hesitate longer in this work; we have neglected it too long. With prayer for wisdom, and with interest in the cause, and with a resolution to go forward, let us engage. And may the Great Head of the Church give success to the enterprise."

To the report was attached a resolution embodying the essential feature recommended. A constitution for such a society was also submitted, defining its object to be "to look up and bring forward such young persons as may be

judged suitable for Home or Foreign Missions, either as teachers or preachers, and to furnish them with the means of an education suited to the peculiar duties to which they may be respectively called." They recommended, at the same time, that the bishop be requested to appoint an agent, to travel through the Conference the ensuing year, to promote the objects of the society. The entire plan was adopted, and carried into immediate execution. This was the origin of education societies in the Methodist Church. The example has been followed in some other Conferences, and we trust the day is not far distant when the plan will become general.

An extract from the report of the Executive Committee, presented the ensuing year, will show the doings of the society during the intervening period. It was written by Dr. Fisk :

"The number of beneficiaries that are now under the patronage of the society is eight, at an annual expense of from 85 to 100 dollars. Two of these are coloured men, both of whom are designed for the African Mission. One of these, Reverend Amos Herring, is a minister recommended for orders to the present session of the New-England Conference, and a man of much promise to the Church. The other is already qualified as a teacher in a high school in Africa, and is expected to be called to that station in a few months. The committee feel highly gratified at the prospective usefulness of these men, and feel confident that either of them has been benefited by the society to an extent that would, if there were no other good accomplished by their operations the past year, amply compensate for all the money and labour that have been bestowed in the operations of the society. Three of the beneficiaries of the society are in the Wesleyan University, from whom the committee have the most gratifying information respecting their religious standing, their attention and improvement, and their promising usefulness. The others are at the Wesleyan Academy in Wilbraham. From these, also, the committee have such returns as afford them, in the main, high satisfaction and encouragement. The whole expense of those under the pa-

tronage of the society the past year is estimated at about five hundred and twelve dollars."

But, like most new enterprises, the present had to encounter distrust and opposition. Another extract from the report will show how our author endeavoured to overcome these :

"4. The youth of our Church must be educated, or the missionary work must be seriously embarrassed and restricted, so far as our instrumentality is concerned. On this point perhaps the committee ought to enlarge a little, by way of illustrating their views, and of calling the attention of the Church to the subject. This is the more necessary, perhaps, because the attitude assumed by this society may seem to be novel in the Methodist Church, and possibly, to some, may seem to conflict with our former doings and teachings. 'It is a departure from our ancient landmarks,' say some. If, however, it be a departure from the ancient landmarks of Methodism to be interested and active in the cause of education, then the committee have yet to learn what ancient Methodism was. But if the objection be, that *to educate in view of the ministry* is the particular point of divergency from the ancient landmarks, to this a few words may be replied :

"1. The Methodist Church *never discarded education in view of the ministry or for the ministry*, but, on the contrary, always encouraged and insisted upon it, both in her Discipline and by her usages. It is true, she has not always sent her candidates or licentiates to a literary and scientific institution for an education. She has endeavoured to educate them *in the work*. In this she has done much, and done, too, in most cases in former years, the best thing she could do, considering the exigencies of the Church. But this was always a tedious process, and only practicable to a certain extent, and only profitable under certain circumstances. When the state of society advances, when theological knowledge increases, and when astute and learned opponents are in the field, the man of God must be proportionally advanced in his intellectual attainments. Besides, our own people now—whether right or wrong, they must judge—will not suffer us to fill up the ministry as we once did. They

say, in the greater portion of the work, 'Do not send us uneducated boys, but *men*—men who can instruct us.' Now either some parts of the work must take all the licentiates and educate them for the other parts, by supporting them as their pastors for the time of their probation, with an assurance of leaving them as soon as they become qualified for their work (a disinterestedness which we rarely, if ever, find, and have no right to expect), or these men must be better educated before they are imposed upon the people.

"2. Another reply to the objection here attempted to be met is, that that form of ecclesiastical organization called Methodism is peculiarly the offspring of Providence, and specially adapted to the circumstances and wants of men. Mr. Wesley followed where Providence prepared the way, and he left the institutions of which he was the author, under God (we mean the prudential regulations of the Church), in such form in Europe, and especially in this country, as to be readily adjusted to the providential variations of society. This is one of the glories of Methodism; and the moment the Church on these points assumes that the canons of the volume of Providence are complete, and that the Church is immutable in her course of prudential and providential measures to benefit mankind, that moment the Methodist Church is stopped in her glorious career of usefulness, and the lapse of a few years will mark her with the wrinkled visage of age; her institutions will become antiquated, obsolete, and inefficient. Against such a prostration of all the energies of the Church, by the bigoted and unmeaning clamour for *old-fashioned Methodism*, every member of the Church should enter his practical protest.

"3. But, whatever may be thought of this process for the regular work at home, it is obvious to the most casual observer that this course will not answer for the missionary work. There we want men of suitable qualifications to begin with, and frequently such qualifications as are peculiar. We want teachers, also, as well as preachers.—We want physicians, not unfrequently, to get access to the soul by doing good to the body. For the missionary work, then, we must have men properly educated. As to the argument

that God will call such men as are properly qualified, if he need any different from what are now in the field, it seems to the executive committee to be an Antinomian heresy, a censure upon the past proceedings of the Church, and an almost blasphemous arraignment of Divine Providence. It is Antinomianism, for it implies that, when the Head of the Church wishes to accomplish any object for the Church, he will do it without human co-operation, which is contrary to the whole analogy of the Gospel. It is a censure upon the past proceedings of the Church, because it has always and uniformly assumed that those whom God calls are not prepared for the holy office without probation and training. It is an arraignment of Divine Providence, for the fact is, we have not the men suitable for the work; and for this deficiency, let not the Church blame God, but herself.

“W. FISK,

“Chairman of the Executive Committee.

“Lynn, June, 1835.”

Dr. Fisk's correspondence was all the time rapidly increasing. Piles of letters are before us, written to him from every part of the New World, from Nova Scotia to Texas and Oregon. They were as varied in their topics as ever, embracing theology, science, literature, Church government, education. Many of these required elaborate answers. Thus a coterie of friends in Virginia, by indulging a course of speculation on the Divine Ubiquity, find themselves soon “in wandering mazes lost,” and Dr. Fisk is appealed to for relief. A person has his mind perplexed in regard to the proper divinity of the Messiah, and he sends an account of his perplexities to our author, from whom he received a reply, which, according to a subsequent acknowledgment, rescued him from the horrors of skepticism. Most of these letters have been lost, or, at least, have not found their way to the writer; but, happily, two have been given to the public, of which one has received a large share of applause. We allude to his reply to the Rev. Mr. Pierpont's tract entitled “Jeaus Christ not a Literal Sacrifice.” In December, 1834, our author received a copy of this tract, enclosed in a letter

from one whose mind was perplexed by it, requesting his views on it. These views were published in *Zion's Herald*, and were so highly satisfactory as to occasion a request from the editor and publisher to have them printed in tract form. We have never seen a more perfect piece of argumentation : it may be regarded as a gem of logic. An answer, I believe, has never been attempted. The other letter, to which allusion has been made, is a reply to a Universalist, who requested proof of an assertion he heard in one of Dr. Fisk's discourses, namely, that the Jews believed in the doctrine of endless punishment. As the letter is not long, we lay it before the reader.

On Future Punishment.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"In the letter I had the honour to receive from you in New-London, touching my sermon on the previous Sabbath, I was not a little surprised that you should question my statement that the Jews, in the days of our Saviour, generally believed in the eternity of future punishment. You say you 'find no evidence that such was the fact;' and if I 'can furnish such evidence, it will much oblige you.'

"Permit me, then, sir, in the first place, to remark, that some of your own authors acknowledge this.—See Dr. Hartley. In fact, I do not now recollect that I ever before heard it denied by any Universalist who might be supposed to have the means of information within his reach. Again, the Targums and many of the Rabbinical writings teach this doctrine. But, to set this subject fully at rest, let me refer you to Josephus, who, you must acknowledge, is the best authority on this subject, not only because he was himself a Jew, and a highly accredited historian, but also because his early life was contemporary with some of the apostles, having been born about four years after the crucifixion of Christ. In his book entitled 'War of the Jews,' chap. ii., sec. 11, he says that the Essenes, a sect of the Jews, believe, in common with the Greeks, that 'bad men suffer immortal punishments after death;' and in sec. 14, that the Pharisees believe that 'the souls of bad men are subject to eternal pun-

ishment.' The Sadducees, it is true, did not believe in a future state, neither in 'angel nor spirit.' But they were an inconsiderable sect as to number, and were principally confined to the higher classes; the people generally, as you must know, sir, held with the Pharisees. See again 'Antiquities of the Jews,' book xviii., chap. i., sec. 3: 'They (the Pharisees) also believe that souls have an immortal vigour in them, and that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life, and the latter are to be detained in an everlasting prison,' &c. See also Josephus's Discourse concerning Hades, which you, sir, and every Universalist, ought to study closely, not only that you may learn that the Jews, as is there stated, believed in a 'lake of unquenchable fire, prepared for a day afore-determined by God, in which one righteous sentence shall deservedly be passed upon all men, when the unjust, and those that have been disobedient to God, shall be adjudged to their everlasting punishment,' but also that you may thereby learn the meaning of certain terms, then in popular use, and adopted by our Lord and his apostles. You will then understand what is meant by '*that day*,' that '*appointed day*,' so often spoken of in the New Testament; as also what is meant by *the judgment*, which Universalists so unmeaningly explain away; by '*rewards*' and '*punishments*,' and by '*unquenchable fire*,' which Universalists confine to this life. Do you believe, sir, that these terms are used in the New Testament in any other than the commonly received sense? And when you here learn what that sense was among the Jews, and hear our Saviour and his apostles talking of *unquenchable fire*, of *salvation*, of *eternal punishment* in a future world, of *the day of judgment*, in the same manner in which the Jews used these terms, thus confirming instead of correcting their views, can you, sir—O! let me put the question to you as a responsible subject of the Divine law—can you, sir, say 'I believe the Bible,' and then add, 'I have no evidence that the Jews believed the doctrine of endless punishment, or that Jesus or any of his apostles believed it?' 'Art thou a *teacher* in Israel, and knowest not these things?' May I not

hope, sir, you will review this whole business? If you have attended to it as little as your ignorance of the belief of the Jews seems to indicate, there is reason for your own personal faith, much more for the responsibility of a public teacher, that you re-examine the subject. If Universalism is an error, it is inconceivably ruinous. In that case, the riches of the material universe would not compensate a man for having had a share in its propagation. So deeply does this consideration impress my mind, that it would deter me from ever propagating Universalism, even if I believed it, unless I believed also in my own infallibility. I ask you, as a reasonable man, am I not correct?

"I subscribe myself, sir, a lover of truth and of man,

"W. FISK.

"Middletown, February 23, 1834."

No man could practise the arts of gaining reputation less than Dr. Fisk. How an undertaking would affect himself was his last thought, if he thought it at all. Had he husbanded his mental resources, and concentrated his powers on the production of a single work, he would, no doubt, have stood even higher than he did in the republic of letters. But, if he did not work for eternity in the sense of Zeuxis, he did in another;* he aimed at moral effect more than scholastic character. Hence his publications, generally, were owing to immediate occasion. Whenever he saw any demand upon his labours, seizing his pen, *currente calamo*, he threw off an article and sent it to the press, often with little time for study or revision. Many of these fugitive pieces are lost, or we have no means of identifying them. Many of them were in reply to some of the numerous attacks made at that period upon the Church of his affections, and, however able and important at the time, would hardly be worth preserving, as the points they treat on have ceased to interest. The cause he defended has outlived much of the opposition of that day, and is now better understood and appreciated. Let the grievances of the past be covered by the veil of Christian charity.

* "I write for eternity," was his frequent remark.

But his writings were not limited in their topics. Everything relating to public morals, social improvement, and human happiness interested him, and often engaged his pen. The spirit in which he pursued this course is finely illustrated by his remarks on a certain occasion to Mrs. Fisk. He was writing an appeal to the public, for one of the New-York journals, on the disregard of human life, as evinced by an explosion of the steamboat New-England in the Connecticut River. On her remarking to him that he did not take the proper course to become a great man—that, instead of writing on every topic, he should confine his attention to a few—his simple and pregnant reply was, “I do nothing merely for the present life !”

From the view we have thus given of our subject's occupations, the reader may be led to believe that he had but little leisure to explore the deep recesses of science and literature. But this was not his calling; nor was the mere book-worm his proper character. Although he duly appreciated the labours of the intellectualist, who is busy in laying the foundations of human knowledge and belief, yet his own mind was more practical than speculative. In the best sense of the term, he was a utilitarian. The knowledge he gained was chiefly with a view to practical uses. Still, by uncommon industry, joined to rigid method, he acquired much more knowledge than most would have done in his circumstances. His labours did not occupy as much time as many would suppose. He despatched business rapidly. He wrote with ease, spent little time in revising and correcting, and none in anticipating or reflecting upon the reception of his works; and, while his labours were performed with a very small expenditure of vital energy, he possessed a ductility of mind and a command of attention that enabled him to pass from one occupation or train of thought to another with great facility. Hence he lost but little time by change of company and employment. By these means he was making continual additions to his information. His mind was remarkably clear and symmetrical, his knowledge well digested and accurately classified, and his memory was both retentive and prompt. Thus, with the advantage of the

excellent foundation laid in early life, he found little difficulty in keeping up with the improvements of the age. Indeed, proficient in science have often expressed their surprise, knowing the multiplicity of his avocations, at the amount of his acquirements in branches to which they supposed he had paid but a very cursory attention. It was of great advantage to him, and, indeed, it may be considered an attribute of a practical mind, that his knowledge was entirely at his command. Hence he was seldom found unprepared, and was rarely at a loss for a happy illustration or an apt allusion in the time of need ; hence, too, he not unfrequently made a splendid effort at but a moment's warning. It was said of the "judicious Hooker," "that he not only knew more, but what he knew he knew better than other men." The latter part of this the audiences he addressed were inclined to say of Dr. Fisk ; for, if he did not astonish, dazzle, and confound them with a useless profusion of learning, yet so perfect was his command of his subject and of himself, so comprehensive his views, and consecutive and satisfactory his logic, that it might well be said he seemed to know what he knew better than other men.

In the early stage of the Wesleyan University, while the board of instruction was incomplete, he sometimes, as before remarked heard classes recite in Greek and Latin, as well as in his own appropriate departments. But this was now no longer necessary. He generally heard only one daily recitation, and attended to the weekly exercises in composition and declamation. The subjects included in his course of instruction were such as are common in most of our American colleges in the junior and senior years, embracing Rhetoric, the Evidences of Christianity, Logic, Ethics, Mental Philosophy, with Political Economy and the Elements of Constitutional Law. His recitations were always conducted by means of a textbook, but without a servile adherence to the author ; and his mode of questioning was adapted to ascertain both how closely they had studied the lesson, and how far they understood the subject. He allowed, and even encouraged, the utmost freedom on the part of the class ; took pains to awaken interest ; patiently listened to what any member had to

say; and satisfied, as far as possible, all inquirers. Frequently he would illustrate the lesson by some playful stroke of humour or a pleasant anecdote; always taking care, however, to maintain a proper dignity while thus ministering at once to instruction and entertainment. In short, his intercourse with his classes had more the air of familiar converse than of formal recitations. He seemed to address them rather *ex animo* than *ex cathedra*. Thus he not only kept the mind of the student constantly on the alert, but he also united in a good degree the advantages both of recitations and lectures. Courses of lectures he did not deliver, either because he preferred the other method of teaching, or because his various engagements did not allow him to prepare them. But he delivered lectures occasionally, either on such portions of the subject as he thought not clearly or satisfactorily treated in the text-book, or on such topics as he desired to expand or to enforce. These lectures were sometimes before the whole college.

What we have said above will give the reader some idea of Dr. Fisk's mode of intercourse with the students out of the recitation-room. He believed that, in order to secure dignity of conduct and manliness of character, it is necessary to inspire the youth with self-respect. To produce, therefore, in his mind a feeling of inferiority, he thought highly prejudicial. Hence he ever treated the students, not as boys, but as young gentlemen. He addressed them as such. He put on no magisterial airs. Though strict as a disciplinarian, yet, by always treating the students with respect, he taught them, in return, to respect themselves and him. He never demanded any marks of courtesy or formal expressions of reverence. He thought it better to leave this to the promptings of private feeling; believing that, if the sentiments and feelings of the student were properly trained, such expressions of respect as urbanity demands or custom sanctions would be spontaneously given, provided the teacher's own demeanour were such as to call them forth; but, in the absence of these, the enforcement of respect by statute,* or

* Thus I have before me a copy of the laws of the University of Vermont, where our subject first entered college. In these it is enjoined that, "whenever

the formal demand of it, would only create an empty parade, or perhaps awaken a spirit of resistance, more fatal to the authority of a teacher than negative rudeness. Perhaps on that subject a just medium may be pursued; for if, on the one hand, everything is to be stiffened into shape by statutes, not only will the teacher know but little of the private feelings of the student, and so, under an outward show of respect, there may be a secret disregard for authority; and, on the other hand, if there be no attention paid to the manners and social observances, the student may be very indifferently qualified to perform his part in that circle of society with which his education qualifies him to mingle. Manners are morals; or, as the French say, "*les petites morales*." And hence, says the philosophic Paley, "Bad manners are bad morals." They take their rise from some defect in the nicer shades of character.

the president or any college governor speaks to any student, or he to either of them, he shall stand uncovered." He shall always give precedence to an officer in passing through a door or a gate. "He is to rise whenever the president, &c., enter his chamber, or any place where he is, and stand till he is desired to sit." Dr. Fisk approved of these as spontaneous courtesies, but he thought that making them the subject of rule and statute was legislating over much.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Abolition Controversy.—Unauthorized Transformation.—Speech at the American Union.—Colonization.—Ability as a Speaker.—Bible Society Address in 1835.—Description of his Preaching.—Impaired Health.—Prepares for his Voyage to Europe.—Letters.—Honour Conferred.

WE now come to a painful portion of our subject's history. It was painful to himself, because it brought him into collision with many of his brethren, and some even of his earliest and dearest friends in the ministry; and it was painful to the Church, because the talents which might have been so available if otherwise employed, were occupied in a comparatively fruitless controversy. A commander in a civil war may render important service to his country; yet his labours must always be painful, and, in a certain sense, unprofitable. The reader will perhaps understand that we allude to the Abolition Controversy. It is not our intention to enter into the merits of this question: all we have to do is honestly to illustrate our subject's course in it. This is the more obligatory on us, as many have blamed him for entering into it; but with what justice our history will show.

Dr. Fisk was always opposed, sentimentally and conscientiously, to the system of slavery; but he saw, or believed that he saw, in the mode in which the anti-slavery movement was conducted, the elements of great mischief, both to the Church and nation. He believed that it seriously threatened a schism in the one, and a dissolution of the other; while, by the feelings it awakened at the South, it was making the present condition of the slaves altogether worse, and actually postponing the period of their emancipation. We need not state the grounds on which these opinions were formed; it is enough to prove that he was perfectly honest in holding and maintaining them.

For a considerable time he stood watching the progress and indications of the controversy without taking part in it. In the month of January, 1835, he received a letter from the editor of *Zion's Herald*, Mr. Benjamin Kingsbury, informing him that, by a vote of the publishing association, the pa-

per was to be opened to the Slavery Question, and inviting him to share in the discussion. It was far from Dr. Fisk's wish to comply ; but it was not designed that he should long remain neutral or silent. In February, a leading abolitionist parodied his celebrated address on Temperance, substituting in brackets for temperance, ardent spirits, and the like, the terms abolition, slavery, and so on, thus converting it into an anti-slavery document. To say the least, this was highly discourteous. A parody, Coleridge has somewhere said, "on an ancient writer is a compliment ; on a modern it is a satire." How greatly was Dr. Fisk surprised to find his name, without his own knowledge or consent, coupled with this contest ! There was now no alternative but to give his influence to one side or the other ; and he did not long hesitate, as silence would, in the estimation of many, have identified him with measures which he deprecated. Nor would it have been proper to have allowed such a trifling with his feelings to go unrebuked. With these views, he drew up his protest against the "unauthorized transformation." It was a powerful article, smooth, keen, eloquent. Many of Dr. Fisk's friends, judging him by the calmness of his ordinary style, were astonished ; and some, like Romilly on listening to the withering sarcasm and invective poured out by Wilberforce in the House of Commons upon a member who sneered at his piety,* wondered that, having such powers at command, he had never before seen fit to use them. Before sending it to press, he read it to Professor Whedon, on whose judgment in literature he placed great reliance, when the following conversation took place : "Doctor, it certainly ought to be well weighed ; it commits you completely to the controversy ; and from the moment you publish it, you hang yourself up as a target to be shot at."

"I know that," was his characteristic reply ; "but I have ever, when called upon by duty, expressed my opinion without regard to personal considerations. I have found it turn out best, and I think I must do it now."

* "Yes," said Sir Samuel to a friend, who remarked that this speech "out-matched Pitt, the great master of sarcasm," "yes, it is the most striking thing I almost ever heard ; but I look upon it as a more singular part of Wilberforce's virtue than of his genius ; for who but he ever possessed such a formidable weapon, and never used it ?"—BROUGHAM'S *Sketches*.

This remark, made in the privacy of the study, was never expected to be repeated, much less published to the world ; and it is therefore a more unequivocal proof of the singleness of his aims. It is in perfect accordance with his usual sentiments. It is evident that he entered upon the contest under conscientious, yet painful emotions.

From a letter to the Rev. Asa Kent, we extract a passage still farther illustrating his views.

"March, 14, 1835.

"With respect to the Anti-slavery Controversy, I fear for the result. You see I have thrown myself upon the billows, but I fear with too little effect ; perhaps not enough to compensate for what I may lose by the course. But I have always remembered some advice of yours when I first entered the ministry, viz., if I had any influence, not to hesitate to sacrifice it, if need be, to the good of the Church. In this matter I may have misjudged ; but I confess I tremble for the consequences of this ultra-abolition doctrine. I think its ultimate tendency, nay, the *aim*, of some of the leaders in this business, is the dismemberment of the political union and of the Methodist Episcopal Church. If you, my dear sir, and other fathers in the Church, see any danger of this kind, ought you not to let your voices be heard ? Perhaps I am in an error here, and the danger is only in my mind. May it prove so. But what other result can possibly follow, if all the North get excited in opposition to the South ?"

Dr. Fisk was not unfrequently stigmatized as a pro-slavery man, as though he was a theoretical supporter of the institution. Nothing could be more unfounded. His sentiments on the subject were essentially Wesleyan. Disapproving of the system, he was in favour of meeting it just as Christianity met the slavery of the Roman Empire, and as the apostles of Methodism did the slavery of the West India Islands. He sought to leaven the public mind with evangelical principles, and would leave the political bearings of the subject to political men. He fully believed that, when the public mind should become fully imbued with Christian principles, the acts of legislatures, which are but expressions of

the mind of the people, would be in accordance with her requisitions. Yet, anxious to maintain a just medium between extremes of pro-slavery and ultra-abolitionism, he sometimes felt the effect of conflicting elements, and found it not always easy to avoid vibrating to one side or the other. A remark of his own indicates his habitual jealousy of himself: "It requires," he said, to Professor Whedon, "it requires an effort in my own mind, in opposing the ultra denunciations of the South, not to look too favourably on what is really wrong; nevertheless, the balance must be kept."

We have already had evidence of our author's candour and liberality towards his opponents. We find additional proof of it in the Abolition Controversy. When he issued his protest against the "unauthorized transformation," he distinguished properly between the action and the motive of the perpetrator. With the latter he had nothing to do. Motives are sacred things, which rest between the individual and his Maker. He only impugned the action. "I have no unkind feeling," he says, "to the brother whose touch has, without the aid of magic, produced the metamorphosis. His motives were undoubtedly good: he was influenced by that warmth of feeling, which has impelled him, and others who were associated with him, into measures that are believed by many, and my humble self among them, to be fraught with impropriety and injury; a course that we are all liable to pursue when the impulsive feelings of our nature preponderate over the understanding." Subsequently to this, finding that the author of the transformation still justified his conduct, and that, on the other hand, many were disposed to criminate him farther than was proper, he published the subjoined paragraph in *Zion's Herald*:

"MR. EDITOR,

"I am sorry to notice that both Brother Storrs, and his friends for him, persist in maintaining the propriety of his course in respect to the metamorphosis of my Temperance Address. If Brother S. really feels, after a fair review of the subject, that he was justified in that course, and if he also justifies the personal reflections which have been thrown

out in the paper of which he is a principal proprietor, in reference to my disclaimer, I can only say he does not view the subject as I view it, and as most of those do whose opinions I have heard and read on the subject. Brother Storrs may rest assured, however, that my Christian regards towards him are the same as ever, because I believe the error the effect of an honest zeal, which, however, *is not according to knowledge*.

“ Brother Storrs is hereby farther assured, that I do not consider the offence of so high a character as seems to have been attributed to it by some of the public periodicals. *He did not say that the abolition sentiments were mine*. It is true, those who did not know my sentiments on abolition would, if I had not disclaimed it, naturally have supposed that I consented to such a use of my composition, especially as Brother S. did not inform the public that I had not consented to it, nor yet that I *was not* a modern abolitionist. I did not, however, in my reply, accuse him of *designing* to represent me as an abolitionist, and I regret to see that design attributed to him. I know him too well to believe he would knowingly misrepresent the opinions of another, or take what he believed to be improper means to propagate his own opinions; and I *thought* I knew him well enough to believe that, when his attention was recalled to a step improper in itself, he would see it and retract. But if I was mistaken in this, I have no more to say on *that point*: the public have my views.

W. FISK.

“ Wealeyan University, April 9, 1835.”

We shall not follow the details of this exciting topic, since it would be as unprofitable to the reader as unsatisfactory to ourselves. It was debated on both sides with an ardour corresponding with the interests that were believed to be involved. The effects, for the time, were unhappy; so much so as to lead Dr. Fisk to resign his seat in the General Conference of 1836, to which he was elected at the session of the New-England Conference of the present year (1835). The reason for this step was a conviction “ that the entire election, himself alone excepted, was carried on party prin-

ciples, and such principles as ought not to be brought in an election in this Conference." His resignation and the reason were entered on the New-England Conference Journal.

About this period, if we mistake not, was formed the "American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Coloured Race." Dr. Fisk, anticipating favourable results from this association, yielded it his support. Being in Boston in 1835, at the time of its anniversary, he delivered there an address, in which he sustained the proposition, "That in every specific enterprise of benevolence, it becomes an enlightened philanthropy carefully to consider, not only the particular condition, but the social relations also, of those whose good is designed; and, in view of these, the measures should be wisely adapted to the end proposed." The address was characterized by comprehensive views, deep thought, and sound philosophy. He showed that this is an age of strong feeling, and that there is in everything a tendency to ultraism; that the most highly-wrought emotion is not always true philanthropy, and that, under intense emotion, it is all-important to follow an enlightened judgment in our measures. Towards the close of the speech he spoke of the probability of the coloured and white races dwelling together in a state of political equality. In a form of government like ours especially, where all political rights must take their origin from the domestic and private relations, he thought it not very feasible. At this point, Mr. George Thompson, who was present, and sat near him, interrupted him by saying, "I should like to see it tried." The orator, without being in the least discomposed, promptly answered, "Will the gentleman give proof of his sincerity by setting the example?" and then resumed his discourse. "I do not assert," said Dr. F., "the superiority of the florid over the coloured countenance, but I say the two races have been separated by the Almighty himself by the strong lines of climate, country, and colour; and it is, perhaps, because man has rudely broken through these lines, and deranged the order of nature, that the evils we at present suffer have come upon us. It is for us now to repair the evil in the best way we can. For this purpose, Dr. F. inculcated the

necessity of caution, conciliation, and careful observation and inquiry—the means intended to be employed by this association.”

This naturally introduces us to another subject. It is well known that Dr. Fisk had long been the decided advocate of African colonization. He thought that he saw in it the only hope of the African race on both continents. Whether his opinions were rightly formed or not, it is not our intention to inquire; but, whatever may be thought of this, no liberal mind can deny that he was honest, disinterested, and benevolent in maintaining them. His sole aim was the elevation, and salvation, and freedom of the wretched sons of Ham. But we prefer giving on this subject his own eloquent and spirit-stirring language. It is extracted from his Protest against the “unauthorized transformation:”

“Finally, I object against the abuse of the ‘address,’ because it thus makes use of my words to commend the labours of Mr. Birney, which, since this is Mr. Birney’s primary object, is the same as commending the dissolution of the Colonization Society; and this, with my present views, I could never do. What! commend the dissolution of that society which has done more than anything else to excite ‘a healthy public sentiment’ in favour of the man of colour, Mr. Birney’s reasoning to the contrary notwithstanding? A society that has indirectly liberated more slaves, probably, than all the anti-slavery societies of our country, from the beginning until now? A society which the unprincipled slaveholder hates and dreads, because it leads to abolition; and the ultra-abolitionist opposes, because it stands in the way of his dangerous high-pressure engine? A society which, by a successful experiment, makes fair promise of giving to the world a convincing and extended exhibition of negro elevation, moral, intellectual, and social? A society that has done more to put down the African slave-trade than has been done by the decisions of kingly courts and republican Congresses? A society that holds its banner over the missionary of the cross on the very shores of paganism, and has already opened up a passage of civilization and salvation into the interior of that dark continent? Dis-

solve this society? No! Forbid it, Heaven! Rather let Christian sympathy gather around it, and Christian munificence sustain it, until it shall become the light of Africa, and the glory of her sons in both hemispheres." Such were his conscientious views, and, consequently, he did not hesitate to lend his most strenuous support to this enterprise. Many of his ablest and most eloquent addresses were in behalf of its interests. On these occasions, his comprehensive views, range of information, clear style, felicity of illustration, and ardent feelings, generally captivated his auditories, and held them as though spellbound; and on one occasion, in the North Congregational Church in Middletown, though the audience were accustomed to hear him, so strong was the sensation created, that no sooner had he resumed his seat than a gentleman on the platform—a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church—rose instantly, expressed his gratification that their town was ornamented and blessed with such talents, and moved an immediate request that a copy of the address just delivered might be furnished for publication. The motion was carried by acclamation. The reader will find the address in question among Dr. Fisk's works.

Dr. Fisk's addresses were usually marked by the characteristics of a sound judgment and a well-furnished mind, rather than by brilliancy of imagination. He had usually enough of the latter to impart interest and rivet attention; but imagination was not his predominant faculty. His speeches and sermons were therefore able rather than splendid. In some cases, however, he threw aside the cool, deliberate manner of the reasoner and instructor, and plunged with all his soul into the midst of his theme. Then he would play upon the feelings of his audience like a skilful organist upon the keys of his instrument. But such attempts were not frequent, and always made with good judgment. On a certain occasion, in the same church, and, it is believed, on the same subject, he had to follow several very distinguished speakers. The exercises had already been protracted, the audience was getting weary, and was looking with some impatience for the last speaker, knowing, probably, that Dr. Fisk was not remarkable for short addresses.

But no man knew himself better, or better understood fitness and propriety. Instead of a deliberate, thoughtful discourse, by the aid of his vivid imagination and ardent feelings he threw off a sparkling, brilliant rocket, that astonished and dazzled the assembly. He held them for a few minutes almost breathless. "It was very short," said a well educated and highly intelligent gentleman to me when speaking of it; "it was very short, but it was, to be sure, a splendid little morsel." As no minutes were kept, the purport of it is not remembered.

The period at which we have now arrived was probably the culminating point of Dr. Fisk's power as a public speaker. With the fire of his youth, he possessed also the polish, the taste, the dignity of mature age and experience. He had already placed himself in a very commanding attitude before the public, and especially the Christian community. In the month of May, 1835, he took another flight still higher than any former. This was at the anniversary of the American Bible Society, held in the Broadway Tabernacle. The address he delivered on this occasion, take it for all and all, was probably the happiest specimen of his abilities. It exhibited all the mental qualities we have already ascribed to him. His survey of his subject was ample, and the address abounds with thought and information, just views, and strong sense. These are enlivened by a happy mixture of fancy and imagination, and are strongly impregnated with emotion. The resolution which he was requested to support was, in substance, that the friends of the Bible, of every religious denomination, be invited to co-operate in placing a copy of the Holy Scriptures in the hands of every child in the United States under fifteen years of age, who might be able to read, but destitute of the sacred volume. He commenced in his usual simple, unpretending manner, and after a few introductory sentences, proceeded thus: "When I take by faith an enlarged view of the future, and contemplate that vast assembly of youth who, should the terms of this resolution be complied with, will receive each a copy of the Word of God; when I see those children gathered into one company, with each a Bible in his hand, the exhibition is

more than beautiful—it is sublime. When I read the resolution," he continued, "in my study, it went through my soul in a thrill of ecstasy, and, indeed, I have scarcely been able to think of anything else since. And is it indeed so? I thank God—I thank the American Bible Society, that all our young children are to be supplied with the Bible! This, indeed, is like a new sun rising over our already favoured and happy land." In this strain he proceeded for some time, and then he launched forth into a wider sea. He took a view of some of the leading characteristics of the age which especially demand the conservative influence of the word of God. It is a "*transition age*," full of change—impulse—excitement. "Go ahead" is the motto, and nothing but a railroad speed will answer. But the Bible is the great regulator. It is the mental and moral balance-wheel that keeps the machinery of the world in order. "The Bible—the Bible must direct and control the wheels of government, the principles of education, the character of the rising generation: this is our spiritual palladium, the glory of the churches, the honour of our nation, the salvation of the world."

But we cannot follow in his train of glowing and comprehensive thought. The address is beautiful throughout: now it is wise and reflective; then brilliant with trope and metaphor; then sportive and playful; and anon, touching and pathetic. On the catholic feature of his resolution he remarked, "*A Sectarian Bible Society!* What a contradiction! I know, indeed, that the branch of Christ's Church to which I belong did establish a separate Bible Society, but it was a measure I could not approve. I always spoke against it, and voted against it, and I believe I always shall." Then he added, while the fire beamed from his eye, and his whole countenance became radiant with Christian feeling, "Let us have but one SECT! Let us all belong to the great BIBLE SECT of America;" and now low murmurs of approbation are heard throughout the house.

Then he changes the current of his remarks, and in a tone of half raillery, replies to the pseudo-political economist's objection, that these schemes of benevolence "will improv-

erish the nation." "Now, sir," said the orator, "I am one of those who do not believe one word of this. We are in no danger, as a people, of dying of consumption; our danger lies the other way; we are rather in danger of dying of plethora." Then he urges the *depleting system* as the only way of guarding against the destructive influence of luxury, sensuality, and selfishness. Benevolence, too, has a renovating power. "It gives one and gets ten." He then, for the sake of illustration, introduces an extended figure of the rotation of water from the ocean to clouds, from the clouds to the earth, and so back again to the ocean. The figure itself is trite; but in this case it was happily introduced, beautifully applied, and admirably sustained. Several distinguished clergymen, of different denominations, pronounced this address the finest they had ever heard in their lives. A report of it, taken on the spot, was afterward published in the New-York Observer; and although such a report must necessarily fall short of the original, yet it is sufficiently apparent that it possessed much more than ordinary interest. Dr. Fisk admitted that no speech of his was ever reported more correctly. Should a volume of Dr. Fisk's works be called for by the public, this address will, most likely, be contained in it.

This is a favourable opportunity for attempting some sketch of our subject as a preacher. He was now, as remarked in relation to the other department, at the zenith of his excellence. Shortly after this, his physical strength began to abate, so that, though his mind retained all its vigour, yet, for want of bodily energy, he failed of producing his former effect. But to describe him accurately would require the graphic pen of a Wirt; yet, as duty requires, we must present some suggestions, merely to aid the conceptions of the reader.

Much of what has been already said will apply to his performances in the pulpit as well as on the platform. Part, also, of our former description of his preaching* will apply equally well to the present period; yet it had undergone some important modifications. The elements were there,

* See page 94.

and the germe; but these had expanded, were matured, and had become more beautiful to the eye and delightful to the mind.

Dr. Fisk's appearance in the pulpit was highly prepossessing, not so much for an air of artificial elegance and refinement, as for the intellectual, elevated cast of countenance, admirable phrenological development, and an unaffected simplicity, modesty, and dignified gravity. His head was classically beautiful, and his bright, mild, benevolent eye beamed with intelligence and thought. His appearance was eminently spiritual; yet his whole person indicated more the Christian virtues than the heroic, more the gentle and subdued temper than the grand and lofty.

In action he was not very remarkable. He was easy, dignified, and natural, but not in the highest degree elegant and oratorical, and as far as simplicity can be from the histrionic. His voice was not very deep and strong, but distinct, varied, and musical. In tenderness and pathos it was perhaps unsurpassed.

He usually commenced his sermons with the enunciation of a few simple propositions, in a style perfectly natural and familiar. Sometimes, however, his exordiums were more profound and elaborate. The doctrine of his text was accurately drawn out and clearly stated, and in few words he would announce the divisions of his discourse. You now saw the hand of a master. You are not astounded, however, by the affectedly intellectual, nor by splendour of language, nor captivated by extraordinary beauty of style. But new views begin to break upon you. Your mind looks this way and that, and you are astonished at the vistas of thought which open before you. Yet it is all so easy and natural, that the preacher does not seem to be doing wonderful things so much as that he is enabling you to do wonderful things. He is eminently suggestive. You feel as if you might have thought it all yourself if you could only have hit upon the starting points. This is the perfection of simplicity—of *naïveté*. The last thing the speaker seems to think of is showing off himself. He is evidently intent on putting you in possession of his own thoughts in the easiest and shortest

way possible. There is but little imagery : all is wholesome, solid food for the understanding. Occasionally you see the professor or philosopher in his turn of thought, modes of statement, and illustration ; and sometimes his discourses are too philosophical to be in the highest degree evangelical ; certainly too much so to be imitated by inferior minds. But, notwithstanding, you feel that the speaker is endeavouring to make you wiser and better.

Thus he passes along the body of his discourse. If he have preached before on that day, or for any cause his nerves are unstrung or his feelings out of tune, he closes, and leaves upon you the impression that he is an intellectual and able, but plain preacher. But hear him when he is in good health and spirits ; when his mind is itself, untrammelled by bodily ailments, and in unexhausted vigour, and when he is about two thirds through his discourse, or earlier, he begins to kindle, and flash, and electrify ; his imagination begins to play ; his feelings seem to fire by the velocity of his mental action, above all, by the elevating nature of his themes ; and now, seizing some strong hold, he pours all his artillery full upon the heart. He raises you up and sinks you down again ; he weeps, and you weep with him. He turns your thoughts upon the sufferings of the Lamb, and you are melted ; or paints the splendours of the New Jerusalem, and you are ravished with ecstasy. Now the audience are bathed in tears of humble love, or transported with raptures of heavenly joy. And now come forth unequivocal, audible testimony to the eloquence and power of the preacher. Sighs and tears, and perhaps shouts, are heard around you. Thus

"The live fountain in the speaker's heart
Sends forth the streams that melt the ravish'd hearers."

A striking instance is given of the power of his oratory, while preaching on a certain occasion in the large church in Forsyth-street, New-York. Having finished the discussion of his subject, he addressed himself directly to the heart and conscience. He described the danger of the wicked man : his exposure, his constant liability to death. He followed him to the brink of Death's dark precipice, and painted him

plunging over the edge into perdition's gulf. The whole scene is vividly before the eye. A preacher sitting below him in the altar suddenly and unconsciously throws out his arms to catch the sinner in his fall, and carry him in faith to the Lamb of God!* This is eloquence.

It was after one of these displays of powerful Christian oratory in the chapel of the University, that a lady of cultivated mind, decided genius, and strong feeling—a stranger in the place—as she came away, said to another, with a half-stifled voice, “Have you any irreligious students in your college?” and, on being answered in the affirmative, added, “Astonishing!”

It should be borne in mind, that as substantial thought formed the basis of his eloquence, the emotions he excited were not less strong than permanent. It was far different from that evanescent and superficial feeling that is generally produced by those of whom Cowper says,

“Like quicksilver their rhetoric they display,
Shines as it runs, but, grasp'd at, slips away.”

Such as we have described was Dr. Fisk in his most favoured moments in the pulpit. A few, and only a few, such sermons was it our privilege to hear from him. It was not until about the period of which we write that I began to hear him frequently, and then his best preaching days were over. In the chapel of the University his sermons were more familiar, and with less effort; but he was always able and instructive, generally animated, and on some few occasions reached his highest flights. In my sketch, my feelings led me to employ the present tense. Alas! that sober reality throws our thoughts back again on the past. His preaching and his labours are among the things that *were*, but *are* no longer. Who shall see and hear another Fisk?†

Dr. Fisk's labours had now made fearful inroads upon his naturally frail constitution. Not that he appeared to a casual observer nearer the grave than he had been for the last

* See Dr. Bangs's Sermon on the Death of Dr. Fisk.

† Those who wish to see a more philosophic and intellectual analysis of Dr. Fisk's character as a preacher, may consult Professor Whedon's “Tribute to the Memory of President Fisk.”

ten years; but to those who knew him intimately the truth was painfully evident. His state of health would have utterly incapacitated most men for exertion, and hence the great admiration of his friends at the amount of labour he accomplished. This admiration was increased by the invincible and invincible sweetness of his disposition. Dr. Orme has thought it necessary to apologize for Baxter's irritability of temper, by ascribing it to his various maladies. We have no need of such an apology for our subject. Greater equanimity, kindness, and patience we never saw. Some have remarked a slight reserve of manner at times in his study, but without any appearance of impatience or of irritation. The same amiability appeared in his demeanour in his family. Here, where the inner man appears without disguise or concealment, he was as lovely as to the transient guest.

The year 1834, as we have already seen, was particularly trying to him. His exertions in the revival, his frequent journeys,* with the alarming illness which has been already mentioned, had brought him very low. These things revived in his mind a project which he had contemplated at intervals for some years, namely, of making a voyage to Europe. On this subject he now consulted his most competent advisers, especially Dr. Sewall, of Washington, who approved the project under these restrictions: that he should take Mrs. Fisk with him, of whose skill and attention in sickness he had had such ample experience; and should make every object subservient to his health. He found the advantage of Dr. Sewall's advice in Mrs. Fisk's assiduous attentions during his alarming illness at Pisa.

Dr. Fisk had been too long accustomed to consult the Divine Will to take any important step without asking "counsel at the mouth of the Lord." He made his contemplated voyage the subject of earnest prayer, and consulted some of the most spiritually minded of his brethren to ascertain what was duty in the case. His ultimate conclusion was that he ought to go. Is it not as important, at least, to inquire what effect any measure is likely to exert upon our

* He travelled, for various purposes, not less than six hundred miles between the 1st of January and his departure for Europe.

piety, as to ask what influence it will have upon health, wealth, or reputation? So, at any rate, thought Dr. Fisk.

The Wesleyan University, now past the period of its infancy, had waxed into a vigorous adolescence. Its friends were anxious to place it on the most solid foundation, and furnish it with all the materials for imparting a thorough and elevated course of instruction. For this purpose, it was important to make some additions to the philosophical apparatus, and to the library, especially in the recent scientific works of Europe.

Hence, at the meeting of the Joint Board of the Wesleyan University, it was resolved to give the president a commission to Europe, for the twofold purpose of benefiting his health and advancing the interests of the institution.

But before his departure he was destined to undergo another probation of his life. In the month of October he visited New-York on business for the institution, and on his return was again confined to his bed, and remained for several weeks under the physician's care. His symptoms now seemed to indicate a rapid consumption. He had profuse night-sweats, with chills, and such a coldness of the extremities that it was impossible to raise a vital warmth; a distressing stricture in the chest, and an aggravated cough. But, as usual, when he began to recover he resumed his exertions. While yet able to sit up only a part of each day, several meetings of the prudential committee were held in his room. But there was, at that time, some important and perplexing business to be adjusted, connected with arrangements in the University during his absence, and which made his presence indispensable. By these, and some other means, his voyage was delayed until the autumn of 1835.

We retard the progress of our narrative for a short time, for the purpose of introducing the following letters, the former to his mother, who had again met with a serious disaster; the other to Mrs. Childs, of Cazenovia, New-York, on the death of her husband.

"Middletown, January 25, 1835.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"It gives me great pain to learn, as I did by sister Mary's letter, that you had met with another fall; and especially have I been afflicted at the painful and aggravated circumstances of that fall. My imagination has again and again run over the occurrence: the fall itself; the dislocation of so many limbs, and the bruising of others; the hours of pain you passed in this bruised and mangled state; the painful ride of twelve miles* in this condition, in such severe weather, in which you must have suffered much from pain and cold, and father must have suffered much, also, from cold and anxiety. The only relief to my feelings in this review is, that it is past, and you are now better. Perhaps it is in mercy to us that our heavenly Father conceals from us often the sufferings of our friends. I was myself ill, and confined at home at that time; but I was free from distressing pain, was surrounded by kind friends, and was seated by a comfortable fire; but how insupportable would my feelings have been, if I had known, at the time, that you were in such circumstances of distress? The Father of mercies, however, sustained your life, and, I hope, kept your soul in peace. It seems, my dear mother, that our Father in heaven sees it best for you to suffer much in your old age. To be bruised and broken so severely three times in a few years, is unusual; but the religion you have enjoyed has no doubt made you feel that all is right. 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chastise,' is the language of the Holy Spirit. What proof you have that God loves you! I doubt not but you are laying up in store a glorious treasure by these sufferings. The heart will thus be driven, by God's grace, from all its selfish retreats, and any remaining earthly ties will be severed. May God bless and sustain you, and grant you the riches of his grace here, and of his glory hereafter.

"I am truly thankful that sister Mary is with you, to attend to your wants, and take care of you. Her attentions will more than compensate for my lack of service, which I

* Judge Fisk and lady were travelling in a sleigh at some distance from home.

so clearly owe you for watching over my pillow in early and helpless childhood, and in sickness in later years. Although, of the two, I have received most of parental care and solicitude, yet upon her mainly falls the duty of filial attention and service. If Providence permitted, I would cheerfully share it with her. Verily she shall not lose her reward; piety towards parents never goes unrequited.

"Since hearing of your misfortune, I have thought of an expression of old Mrs. P., our brother P.'s mother. Her head had been broken and permanently deformed by a hurt from a horse; but says she, in love-feast, on a certain occasion, 'When I get to heaven, I shall have as sound a head as any of you.' Your limbs had become stiff and enfeebled independent of fractures and dislocations; you would soon need a new edition, at any rate—much more after these injuries. But 'these vile bodies shall be fashioned like unto Christ's most glorious body;' then shall your poor fractured frame be strung anew with ligaments that shall never be luxated, and with limbs of ethereal elasticity and heavenly polish, that shall never be fractured. What a consolation are thoughts like these to a decrepit and suffering Christian! Such a consolation, my dear mother, I doubt not, is yours.

"My own health has been poor ever since I returned from New-York. I preached last Sabbath for the first time for about nine weeks. I am now much better than I have been. I hope some one of the family will write again soon, that we may know how you get along. We all join in love to you and to all the family.

"Your affectionate children,

W. & R. FISK."

To Mrs. Childs.

"Middletown, April 11th, 1835.

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"Since I first heard of the death of your lamented husband, I have purposed to write you a letter of condolence and sympathy; and yet I have felt almost forbidden to approach that grief which, from its depth and the bitterness of its anguish, may deem this well-meant address almost an unwelcome and unseasonable intrusion. I am aware that

there is an anguish of heart that is sacred, with which a stranger, especially, cannot safely intermeddle. But, although my acquaintance with you, personally, has not been long and intimate, yet it is of such a character, and is so strengthened by an intimacy with branches of your family, that I claim to be a sharer in that sorrow which has suddenly spread a gloom over the whole family circle. But what shall I say? If I speak of the private and public virtues of your deceased husband, to which his numerous acquaintances and friends bear such ample testimony, this may seem but an aggravation of the loss. If I cite your attention to your remaining blessings, and especially to the circle of affectionate children, who cluster like gems of loveliness around your widowed heart, even this may swell the heaving tide of sorrow, when you remember that you now share these blessings ALONE, and that your children are FATHERLESS. And yet, although these considerations may not seem to lessen the amount of grief, they certainly will mitigate its bitterness. If the lightning stroke has riven the heart, it has not dismantled the trunk. While your children are around you, your leaf shall not be withered, nor shall even your worldly hope be blasted. While you live, you shall bless with your prayers, and cultivate with your fostering hand, the budding shoots of the first and second generation, and rejoice that you do not live unblest nor in vain. Such are your earthly consolations, and they are neither few nor small. But you have, I doubt not, higher consolations than these. That God whose you are, and whom you serve, has not left you comfortless, and will sustain you in all your afflictions. You know 'he has done all things well;' and can you not trust him? Can you not 'kiss the rod,' and say, 'Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight?' Our blessed Saviour suffered for us even until his God forsook him; but in your suffering God has not forsaken you. He has bound up your heart with cords of love, that it may not break; he has mingled in your cup of sorrow the ingredients of mercy, that the poisonous draught may not destroy. In your Saviour's bitterest suffering, he had only an *angel* to strengthen him, but you have the Saviour himself. He that wept at

Lazarus's grave is 'a merciful High-priest;' he is 'touched with the feelings of your infirmities,' and 'will not leave you comfortless.' With what confidence can I commend you, dear madam, to his grace. I leave you in his hands. Your daughter Catharine found the stroke, at first, all but insupportable; I trust, however, she is comforted.

"Mrs. Fisk joins in sympathetic and affectionate remembrance to yourself and dear Helen. My regards and blessing to all the other children.

"May the 'God of all comfort' comfort your and their hearts in all your tribulation.

"Most affectionately, your sympathizing friend,

"W. FISK."

A few days before his departure for Europe, he received the following testimony of esteem from his Alma Mater :

"Brown University, September 4, 1835.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"I have the honour to inform you that, at the late meeting of the Board of Fellows of Brown University, the degree of Doctor of Divinity was unanimously conferred upon you by that authority, and that the act was duly announced on Commencement Day.

"I am happy to avail myself of this opportunity of expressing my high respect for your personal and official character, and of assuring you that, with sincere esteem, I subscribe myself,

"Dear sir, yours very truly,

"F. WAYLAND,

"President of the Brown University.

"To the Rev. Willbur Fisk, D.D.,
"President of the Wesleyan University." }

CHAPTER XVII.

Voyage to Europe.—Paris.—Occupations.—Letter.—Rome.—Rev. Pierce Connolly.—Letter from Florence.—Milan.—Remarks on his Tour in Italy.—Switzerland.—Hofwyl.—England.—Conference at Birmingham.—Painful Incidents.—Remarks.

ON Tuesday, the 8th of September, Dr. Fisk and his lady, accompanied by Mr. Harvey B. Lane, now professor of mathematics in the Wesleyan University, embarked on board the *Roscoe*, Captain Delano, for Liverpool. He took a good supply of letters of introduction from and to various personages distinguished in religious, literary, and civil stations. He was commissioned, likewise, by sundry religious and benevolent societies, to represent them abroad.

We insert an interesting correspondence which occurred on the eve of his embarkation.

To Rev. W. Fisk, D.D.

"New-York, September 7, 1835.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"In the name and on behalf of the Young Men's Missionary Society of New-York, auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the undersigned have been directed by our board respectfully and affectionately to communicate the expression of our grateful sense of the obligations you have conferred upon us, as well as upon the cause of missions in our Church, by your valuable services on so many occasions.

"And, now that you are on the eve of departure for foreign countries in quest of health, be pleased to accept the assurance of our deep solicitude for the successful prosecution of your voyage, and for the safe return of yourself and your estimable lady to your country and friends. Our prayers shall ascend to the throne of our common Lord, that your visit to Europe may conduce to the restoration of your enfeebled constitution, and that during your absence you

may be as useful in the several departments of education, benevolence, and religion, as you have been in our own country. And if, in the providence of God, you should find opportunity to represent the cause of missions, and especially that of *Africa*, to the friends of Christ among our transatlantic brethren, and to the Committee of the Wesleyan Missionary Society in London, we beg to be affectionately remembered to them all, and to bespeak, through you, an interest in their prayers.

"On behalf of the society, we commend you to your God and to our God, that he may have you in his holy keeping, and bid you an affectionate and fraternal adieu. Your brethren in Christ,

D. M. REESE, *Pres't.*

"G. P. DISOSWAY, *Cor. Sec.*"

"To the President and Secretary of the Young Men's Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in New-York City.

"New-York, September 8.

"RESPECTED BRETHREN,

"On the eve of my departure for a foreign land, every expression of respect and friendship from my fellow-citizens and Christian friends in America is most grateful to my feelings. Your friendly and truly Christian parting salutations are especially so, both for the matter and the manner. The pleasure is increased by the reflection that these expressions of kindness and Christian friendship are from one of the most efficient auxiliaries of the great missionary enterprise in which we are engaged. To you, brethren, and those associated with you, belongs the honour of having contributed so efficiently to the establishment of the first foreign mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church; and, while the Gospel lives and spreads in Africa, thousands on thousands shall be raised up to bless the memory of the Young Men's Missionary Society of New-York City.

"You have, Christian brethren, set a noble example. You are engaged in a noble work. Your influence is seen and felt in the foreign missionary spirit which has been excited throughout our Church, for in this work you led the

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way. For any little service that I have rendered to the cause, however pleasant it may be to have the gratitude of my Christian brethren, I deeply feel that I have no cause for self-gratulation. I have done far too little; still I feel thankful to the great Head of the Church that I have been permitted to have any part or lot in this holy enterprise; and you may be assured that I shall avail myself of every 'opportunity to represent the cause of (American) missions, and especially that of Africa, to our transatlantic brethren.' I shall not fail to make them acquainted with your labours and success in this glorious work, and 'especially in Africa,' and 'bespeak' for you an 'interest in their prayers.' It is not among the least of the gratifying considerations connected with your address, that you have given us a kind assurance of a remembrance in your prayers. In the Divine protection is our only trust; that protection is granted in answer to prayer. Be pleased, Christian brethren, to present my Christian salutation to your board of managers, with an affectionate farewell; and accept for yourselves my strong assurances of the undiminished affection with which I now, as ever, hold you enshrined in my heart, and in the prospective perpetuity of which I bid you adieu.

"W. FISK.

"D. M. Reese, M.D., *Pres't.*, } Y. M. Miss. Soc. of New-York."
 "G. P. Disosway, *Cor. Sec.*, }

As the public are already in possession of very ample information of Dr. Fisk's travels from his own able hand, it would be quite superfluous to go minutely over the same ground. All we aim at, therefore, in this part of our work, is to present a few additional facts, and to these we may add some illustrative observations.

During the voyage, Dr. Fisk received very gratifying attentions from the captain of the Roscoe and the whole company; but, from sea-sickness, he was incapable of outward enjoyment. Once only he attempted to preach, but was unable to finish his sermon. Indeed, he was confined to his berth nearly the entire passage of eighteen days, and a part of the time suffered severely. On his arrival at Liverpool,

under the exhilaration of spirits consequent upon a sudden restoration to ease and comfort, he wrote that humorous and most graphic description of the sea-sickness, which, on its publication, so greatly surprised those who were not aware of this facetious vein in his constitution. Intending to visit England at a more genial season, our travellers, after a few days of rest at the hospitable mansion of T. Sands, Esq., by whom they were most kindly entertained, proceeded to the metropolis, where they were received most affectionately by the venerable and Reverend Richard Reece, president, that year, of the British Conference. They spent a few weeks very pleasantly at the house of Mr. Reece's daughter and son-in-law.

Early in November they left London for Paris. Arriving at Dover, Mrs. Fisk was taken seriously ill, which detained them a week. But this trying season was not unemployed, nor employed unprofitably. Dr. Fisk had received a request from the managers of the Methodist Missionary Society to do what he could for the advancement of their cause, by communicating information to them while abroad. He commenced the execution of the task at Dover, by writing three long letters to the corresponding secretary of the society, the Rev. Dr. Bangs. In the first, he details the systematic operation of the Wesleyans of England in the missionary work. In the second, he "inquired into the practicability and expediency of adopting some of the peculiarities of the British system in the United States, and especially recommends the appointment of a resident correspondent secretary, to be employed exclusively in behalf of the society." This measure, however, had been talked of for some time, and at the ensuing General Conference, which met at Cincinnati, it was adopted, and Dr. Bangs was appointed to the office. He had formerly held it in connexion with his situation as editor of the *Christian Advocate*. The third letter was on the means of providing men for the service, and of keeping up the spirit, of missions.

Every traveller of a distinctive character has his own peculiar aims, and selects his own class of associations and subjects of inquiry. Dr. Fisk's character and aims should

be kept in view in perusing his own account of his travels. He did not go abroad as a fashionable tourist, but as a Christian clergyman and a man of letters. In this character he sought for knowledge, solid, useful, and available. Yet it was not such as would suit the mere man of taste and elegant pursuits, nor yet such as belonged to the professor of any particular science, but rather that general information adapted to his own peculiar position and cast of mind. How industrious and successful he was, the reader may learn from the instructive letters addressed during his tour to the corresponding secretary of the Missionary Society, the professors and students of the Wesleyan University, and to sundry private friends.

While in the gay and seductive capital of France, our traveller was not found attending any places of public amusement, nor mingling in scenes of gayety unsuited to his character. He shunned the reproach too often brought on this ground against clerical tourists. His days were employed in observing whatever was worthy of observation in that emporium of the sciences, and in executing his commissions for the Wesleyan University. His evenings were generally spent in some select circle of friends, where social converse, intelligent and pious, occupied the hours, which were uniformly closed with reading and expounding the Scriptures, singing, and prayer. Several delightful acquaintances were formed here, especially that of the Rev. Messrs. Newstead and De Jersey, with their ladies, Wesleyan missionaries residing in Paris, and the Rev. Robert Baird, the excellent and well-known agent of the Foreign Evangelical Society. On the Sabbath he preached in the Wesleyan missionary premises, which were in the lower story of the house in which General Lafayette resided when in the capital, and where he expired. "I am happy to say," observed a correspondent of the Commercial Advertiser, "that Dr. Fisk delighted, and, I hope, profited all who heard him. He made many acquaintances while here, and employed well his time in seeing whatever was worthy of his notice." For an account of the observations he made, we must refer the reader to the Travels. He spent in Paris about six weeks.

One particular we ought not to omit. We have seen, in the course of this memoir, the interest with which he regarded his brethren in the ministry. He sympathized deeply with them in their restricted means of support, often unable properly to provide for their families, and especially to educate their children. He saw, moreover, that this was producing a pernicious effect upon the interests of religion. Many toiled on in great discouragement, while some were driven from the ministry; and the Church, of course, paid a heavy penalty for her mistaken policy. These reflections kept possession of his mind, and wrought deeply upon his feelings. They haunted him even in his dreams, those apparent realizations of our waking thoughts. One night he thought himself in his own Conference, pleading the cause of his suffering brethren; and so deep became his emotions, that he "was," to use his own words, "choked with weeping." "So great," says Mrs. Fisk, "was my dear husband's distress, that he shook the bedstead so much that it awoke me first; and, after I had awaked him, he sobbed like an infant for some time."

Under these feelings, he wrote two long letters upon the subject for the *Christian Advocate*, urging the importance of making more systematic effort for the support of the ministry, and again commending the financial arrangements of our British brethren.

As Dr. and Mrs. Fisk had no children, they adopted, while residing at Wilbraham, a little girl, whom they ever regarded as their own. During their absence in Europe, she remained in Middletown with Mrs. Fisk's mother. After recovering from his alarming illness in Pisa, Dr. Fisk addressed to Martha the subjoined letter:

"Pisa (Tuscany), February 14th, 1836.

"MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

"When I last wrote to your grandmother, which I think was from Turin, I gave you some account of our route to that place. If you take your map, you will be able to trace out the following, which has been our course since: From Turin through Asti, Alessandria, Novi, over the Apennines

by the Val di Scrivia to Genoa ; from Genoa along or near the Mediterranean Sea, sometimes close by the shore, sometimes upon the mountains above the clouds, and sometimes going under the mountains, through tunnels or arches that had been dug through to save the difficulty of climbing over them. We passed the towns of Spezzia, Sarzanna, Carrara, Massa, and Lucca, to Florence. From Florence we kept down the Arno to Pisa. We stopped in Genoa four or five days, and in Florence over a week ; saw many things which you would be pleased to hear about, and which I will read to you from my journal if our heavenly Father spare us to return home. A few things, however, I will write now, to entertain you when you feel sad in thinking of our absence. One thing has greatly pained us through our entire route since we came into Italy, and the farther we go the worse it is, and that is, the extreme poverty of a portion of the people. A great many little, ragged, dirty, miserable children seem to spend all their time in begging from travellers. They would follow our carriage sometimes a mile, with the most pitiful tones begging that we would give something to a '*poor little hungry boy or girl,*' &c. These poor children had *no fire*, and often no bread. Sometimes they go away into the high mountains barefooted, and some of them with wooden shoes, to bring great loads of brush, or knots and limbs of trees, to make a little fire. The poor women, who take in washing, do not wash in hot water in a tub, but they go to the rivers and streams, and stand, some of them on the shore, and some of them in the middle of the stream, without shoes or stockings, when it is so cold that ice is forming on the edges of the stream, and there they wash their clothes. They often have a rock or a stone for their washboard. When they have finished, they put their clothes in a basket, and their basket on their heads, and carry them home. The poor people, especially in the mountainous parts of the country, live mostly upon chestnuts, which they boil and roast, and sometimes pound or grind, and make into cakes. When chestnuts fail there is a famine.*

* It is known that chestnuts yield an excellent meal, affording a very palatable bread. Evelyn, as quoted in Downing's Landscape Gardening, informs us

"I have already told you the poor people wear wooden shoes. This is almost universal in France. In Piedmont they oftener have wooden soles and cloth tops; and in Modena and Lucca they had no quarters to their shoes, only soles and vamps, so that without care they would step out of them. They are so used to it, however, that they do much better than we should at first with such shoes. We frequently, in Piedmont and Genoa, saw the women dressed in bodices, or a kind of stays, which were laced before, and ornamented with embroidery and various kinds of needlework. Some of them looked as though they had come down from their great-grandmothers as a family inheritance. These stays, of course, are left exposed to view, as the most dressy article of apparel, while over them is worn a sort of spencer, or short loose gown open in front. On their heads, the middle and lower classes of France, when they go out, almost universally wear neat white caps instead of bonnets. In Piedmont the headdress looked very much like a large white towel folded and laid upon the top of the head, with one end hanging down over the back of the neck. I could not see that they were fastened in any way to the head. In Genoa the headdress is a large white veil, tastefully adjusted to the head, and hanging in drapery round the shoulders. In Tuscany they wear those great Leghorn flats, such as they are when we buy them new in America, before they are made into bonnets; for this is the country where those bonnets are made. They are sent to America from a seaport fourteen miles from here, called Leghorn: hence they are called Leghorn hats. Some of the people here also wear black beaver hats. The higher classes, however, in all these countries, dress very much like Americans.

"My sheet is almost full, and I must omit farther details for the present. We have been here in Pisa between three and four weeks. Your dear mother was first sick with the chicken-pox. As soon as she got better, I was taken sick,

that the bread of the chestnut-meal is extremely nutritive, and very favourable, withal, to the complexion. Formerly fritters were made of it, which, being wetted with rose-water, sprinkled with grated parmigans (parmesans?), and fried in fresh butter, were quite a delicacy.

and was confined about two weeks. I am now better, and we think of starting for Rome and Naples in the course of the week: have not determined whether we shall go by steamboat from Leghorn, or go round by land. * * *

"From your affectionate parents, W. & R. FISK."

There may be some difference of opinion among our readers as to the introduction of the preceding letter. But the design of a book of travels and that of a biography are in some measure different. The object of the one is more particularly to impart information; that of the other, to exhibit character. The above letter presents Dr. Fisk in an aspect in which we have had no previous opportunity of introducing him. It shows him talking affectionately and familiarly to a child, and for this purpose, with good judgment, selecting such topics as would be likely to interest his reader.

Extract of a letter to Dr. Jabez Bunting, of London, dated at Pisa, February 12, 1836.

"The more I see of popery, the more convinced I am that this is emphatically the GREAT HINDERANCE of the Gospel—'the man of sin, that *letleth* and *will let* till he be taken out of the way.' I wonder and wonder!! Next to the 'mystery of godliness,' the 'mystery of iniquity' is most marvellous! Whence had Satan such wisdom? Whence had iniquity such venom? How is it possible that all the combined cunning and sin of earth and hell could have succeeded, not merely in measurably corrupting the Gospel, but in filling the very channels of salvation with the waters of death? How have these waters deluged this fair land! How have they steeped the inhabitants in the deadly bath! How are the pride of men and the policy of states, yea, and of Protestant states too, pledged to sustain the diabolical system! Yes, my dear sir, England, great and glorious as are her moral and intellectual influences to the contrary, has, by her national policy, strengthened and intrenched the power of the Beast. This you, with all other good men, doubtless see and deplore. The only question now is, What is to be done? Cannot you, my dear sir, and men of your wisdom and in-

fluence, devise and execute some plan to diffuse light into poor benighted Italy? O for some moral hero, who, crossing the Alps in the spirit of a Hannibal, shall carry the war into the enemy's country, and push the battle to the very gates of Rome."

So far as incident is concerned, the present might have been made the most interesting portion of our work. But we have been anticipated here by an abler pen. We must, therefore, leave a blank for the reader to fill up, at his pleasure, from Dr. Fisk's Travels. Leaving, therefore, our travellers to pursue their way, we rejoin them again at Rome, where they spent the Passion Week. Here they saw what excrescences had been borrowed from paganism to deform the beauty and impair the efficiency of Christianity, and how pantomime and mummary are often substituted for devotion. Passion Week is the most favourable time, as is well known, for seeing these exhibitions, and hence our travellers, like other tourists, selected this season for their sojourn in the city of his holiness. A very ample account of the ceremonies will be found in the Travels, accompanied by philosophic reflections upon Romanism, touching its moral, religious, political, and economic tendencies. Christianity at Rome is little more than an assemblage of ceremonies, which seem to be kept up for the purpose of attracting money-spending travellers from abroad, and of beguiling and fleecing the people at home. It is doing nothing there, or throughout Italy, to enlighten, to reform, to elevate the people, or in any way to improve their condition. It is an incubus upon the body politic. How wonderful the difference between a papal and a Protestant country!

While in Rome Dr. Fisk was concerned in an incident which his modesty and dislike of egotism induced him to suppress. He travelled from Leghorn to Rome with the Rev. Pierce Connelly. This gentleman was a clergyman of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States, and had been settled at Natchez, Mississippi. He had a wife and two children. Having become doubtful of the Protestant faith, he was now on a visit at Rome, the fount-

ain, as he supposed, of information, to prosecute his inquiries on the subject. Dr. Fisk had several conversations with him, and finally sent him a letter, of which the following is a rough copy. It is somewhat long, but, we trust, not too long to interest the reader, especially as, in our country, it bears upon other questions besides the one primarily involved.

"Rome, February 29, 1836.

"REV. AND DEAR SIR,

"The subject of the '*Unity of the Church*,' as it is termed, has undoubtedly received much more attention from you than from me; for I confess it has always struck me as one of so easy a solution, if made a question, that no abstruse reasoning or deep research was necessary to decide it. You, therefore, could not expect, if I were called on, that I should be able to enter far into the arguments, pro and con, by which this subject is elucidated (better, perhaps, say obscured) by those who have discussed it. You will, however, pardon me, I trust, in making a few suggestions, or, if you please, proposing a few questions. My solicitude for the cause of truth, to say nothing of the interest which has been excited by my short acquaintance with you personally, would justify me, I think, however I might fail of my desired object, or however irrelevant or unsatisfactory my suggestions might seem to you.

"That Christ has a Church on the earth, and that he views that Church as *one*, we are, I suppose, all agreed. It is also, I presume, granted that, to be members of the 'kingdom of Heaven' in glory, it is necessary to be members of the 'kingdom of Heaven' on earth; or, in other words, that those, and *those only*, who belong to Christ here, will be with him hereafter. With these principles of agreement at the starting-point, we are prepared to inquire, Who are Christ's on earth? What are the requisite characteristics to constitute an individual a member of the body of Christ? Will a visible membership, and a partaking of the sacraments, be sufficient? Then ought Ephesians, v., 5, to be changed to read thus: 'For this you know, that whoremongers, and

unclean persons, and covetous men, who are idolaters, *have an inheritance* in the kingdom of Christ and of God;' for whatever church you fix upon as the true Church, such characters are found in it. Besides, the apostle John speaks of some 'who went out from us, because they were not of us.' Here, then, were members of the *visible Church*, who, however, were not of the *true Church*; indeed, I will not insult the understanding and moral feelings of one educated like yourself by dwelling long upon arguments to prove that visible church-membership while living, or canonization after death, cannot of themselves constitute a man a member of the *kingdom of Heaven*, here or hereafter; otherwise, 'Christ came to *confirm* the works of the devil;' to be 'a minister of sin;' to introduce, in fact, the most demoralizing and extended system of licentiousness with which the world was ever cursed. If, then, we must acknowledge that not all who are of any visible church are 'of the kingdom of Heaven,' what becomes of the 'unity of the visible Church?' Are not the hypocrites who are members of the visible Church a part of *its* unity? *Most certainly they are*; and, therefore, the *unity* of any *visible Church* now existing on the earth is not the *unity* of *Christ's Church*. I confess to you, my dear sir, that this, granting the premises, appears to me as clear a demonstration as any proposition in physics. The premises I am sure you will not deny. And will it be said that, since a part of the visible Church, perhaps a majority (although this is far from being certain, or even probable, always), is 'of the kingdom of Christ,' that therefore its visible unity is not destroyed? This would be making the unity of a compound the same as that of one of the ingredients; it would be making a part identical with the whole; it would be making *that* unity which is bounded by visible lines the same as *that* unity which is not bounded by these, but by other lines, *invisible* and *indefinite*! My dear sir, what logical mind could consent to such a proposition? Turn it, sir, as you may, you must come to the same conclusion at the last, that the visible Church of Christ is, strictly speaking, *one thing*, and the true Church *another*; they have not the same unity, they have not the same identity.

“Here, I think, it would be perfectly safe to rest the argument; but, willing to look at it on every side and in every supposable position, let it be inquired again, What are the characteristics of the true Church? Shall we say that those, and those only, are the members of the true Church who have personal holiness, *together with* a membership in some particular church, and a participation of its sacraments? Assume, for the sake of the argument, which church it shall be to which these holy persons must belong in order to belong to the true Church. Say, for the sake of the argument, it is the Roman Church. The two characteristics, *belonging to the true Church*, and *being personally regenerated and made holy*, constitute them members of the true Church, without both of which there is *no salvation*, here or hereafter; but this would exclude from all hopes of heaven all who are not members of the Roman Church. Are you prepared to adopt this? It is, I believe, the doctrine of Romanism, and ought, for consistency’s sake, to be the doctrine of all who say that there is one, and only one, visible true Church on the earth. And yet St. Peter, who is claimed to be the first pope, said, in view of the devotion of certain Gentiles, ‘Of a truth I perceive,’ &c. (Acts x., 34, 35), although these persons had not as yet become members of the visible Church; besides, this declaration of St. Peter’s evidently implies that in *every nation*, even where Judaism and Christianity were not known, there might be those who feared God and wrought righteousness. But, passing this, and many other scriptures that might be adduced, if the two qualifications, personal holiness and membership in the true Church, be necessary to constitute one ‘of the kingdom of Heaven,’ then the question occurs, How and when is the former of these obtained? Here is a regenerate person. Did he become holy before or after joining the Church and partaking of the sacraments? If before, then, should he die before he has the opportunity of participating in the sacraments, he will nevertheless be saved, because the regenerate cannot be lost; and thus one who was not a member of the visible Church is nevertheless proved to be of the true body of Christ, a branch of the true vine. Much more, then, on this supposition is the unity

of the true Church proved not to be the same as the unity of this visible Church, because this *visible Church* not only has some in it that are not of the true Church, but some who are of the true Church are not in it. But if it should be said that men do not become holy until they become members of the visible Church and participate in the sacraments, then all must be evidently and inevitably lost who do not belong to this supposed true Church, for men cannot be saved without holiness. Such a sentiment would certainly make God a hard master, because it is physically and morally impossible for some men to receive the sacraments of this supposed true Church. Moreover, if all are unholy or unregenerate until they join the Church and participate in the sacraments, then is the Church, in the first instance, made up of the unregenerate men, with no certainty of their becoming regenerate, unless it be said that the sacraments infallibly work regeneration. If this is pretended, it will follow that all who are members of the true visible Church are also members of Christ's body, and heirs of the kingdom of glory; but this has already been seen to be contrary to fact, since some of the worst characters have been and are members of the visible Church. The sacraments, then, do not necessarily and certainly impart spiritual grace; and, therefore, as all are received in unregeneracy, they may continue so; and thus there is a possibility that a majority, and even all, of Christ's true visible Church may be of the synagogue of Satan.

"Let me ask farther, Do the sacraments impart grace at all? Are they even *directly* the medium through which God imparts grace? Is not their use strictly this, that they are a help to *faith*, which, in the Word of God, is made the only direct medium of communicating grace? If this latter conclusion be true, as I think it must be, unless all are certainly recipients of grace, without any other condition, who participate in the sacraments, then may there be regeneration *before* receiving the sacraments: for the New Testament gives numerous instances of faith in Christ, and the consequent fruits of peace in believing and joy in the Holy Ghost, before the believing converts were received into the Church.

Indeed, this was the general order under the ministry of the apostles. Here, then, are cases where some belonged to Christ by regeneration, and principles are here recognised by which others may receive the same grace, without being members of the visible Church : another proof that the unity of Christ's Church is not identical with the unity of any visible church.

" Permit me, my dear sir, to inquire farther, What is the advantage of such an exclusively true visible Church of Christ as that for which you would contend ? Is it that such a church may administer the ordinances effectually ? But if the ordinances are only a *help to faith*, then may they be administered by different churches, and, if received believingly, may have all the efficacy of their original design. But if you think there is some mysterious grace in the ordinance itself, then it behoves you to do these following things : You must prove *this* from *Scripture*, and not from tradition, nor any assumed authority of a pretended *true* Church of Christ ; for, remember, we are on the preliminary question, *Which is the true church ?* and therefore cannot permit any church to assume its own authority, in order, by its authority *ex cathedra*, to establish and prove its own claims. If you maintain that there is efficacy in the sacraments themselves when administered by the true Church, you must show why all men who receive them are not regenerate and holy ; that is, why, in *every church*, and, of course, in the true Church, whichever it is, from the days of Christ until now, there have been, and still are, many arrant hypocrites. It becomes you, also, to show, if this grace is received only through ordinances, &c., how God can be just, much more, how he can be merciful to all men, when by his providence he has rendered it physically impossible for some men to receive these sacraments from the hands of the true Church. Indeed, sir, I cannot conceive of what possible advantage this exclusively true visible Church can be, unless it is for the two purposes of the *power of the keys* and of *transubstantiation* ; with respect to both of which purposes, it appears to me the considerations just urged press upon them very heavily. If the text so often quoted, ' Whatsoever ye bind on

earth,' &c., be taken in the Roman Catholic sense of it, then this binding and loosing must be, *ipso facto*, saving or damning by receiving into or rejecting from the Church ; in which case all the difficulties just urged will press upon the advocate of such a sentiment. If the text, 'This is my body,' &c., be explained as Romanists explain it, then all who take of the consecrated Host must have spiritual life, according to Christ's own words ; that is, they must be regenerate : and all who do not eat the consecrated Host will not have life ; that is, cannot be saved : and in this case the preceding considerations will lie against the doctrine with all their force. In every point of view, then, this doctrine of the visible unity of the Church of Christ, whether it be examined in view of the necessary characteristics of such a church, or in view of the purposes for which such a church is claimed, we find it fraught with inconsistency, embarrassed with difficulty, and altogether useless. Why, then, should we vex ourselves and each other by seeking after such a church, or defending the claims of this or that body of professing Christians to such exclusive prerogatives ? Protestants do not claim the power of the keys in the popish sense, and none but high-toned Episcopalians, I believe, claim any mysterious grace in the ordinances themselves. But if there be any such power of the keys, or any transformation of a wafer to a god by a ministerial consecration, I know not how any man can prove that I, as a Methodist minister, do not possess it as well as the priests of Rome. Hence the highest purposes claimed for this unity of the visible Church may, for aught that appears, be just as well secured without it.

" Finally, Does the *Bible* indicate any such visible *unity* ? Here, sir, permit me to tell you what is in my heart, and I trust you will receive it in the same spirit with which I write it. Have you not mistaken your course ? Why should you and I go on a pilgrimage to Rome or to Mecca to ascertain the truth or falsity of Romanism or Mohammedanism, or to ascertain which is the true Church ? 'To the *law* and to the *testimony* ; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.' We have our Bibles at home. In our closets, with hearts lifted to God, and with

our eye upon the *revealed, written, inspired* word, we should look for the true Church. When we leave this proper course of inquiry, and go to Rome to inquire of popes, cardinals, and priests, we have virtually decided the question, although we may not be aware of it. We have constituted the very Church which is the subject of investigation the oracle to settle our doubts and proclaim her own prerogatives.

"My dear sir, pardon the freedom with which I have spoken. I have done it from a deep conviction not only that your own interest and that of your interesting wife and children are at stake, but also and especially from the conviction that the Church of Christ and the interests of religion might sustain a loss.

"Whatever you may think of my communication, which has become much longer than I originally intended, believe me yours, in the bonds of Christian affection and sincere regards,
W. FISK."

But the well-intended effort was in vain. The letter was written the evening before our travellers left for Naples, and after a week's absence, in the first Cathedral they visited upon their return, Mr. Connelly was in the act of renouncing his Protestantism.

Dr. Fisk did not go abroad in the character of a tourist of pleasure nor a mere *virtuoso*; yet, with his lively curiosity and desire of knowledge, he would naturally wish to see whatever tended to enlarge his information, improve his taste, and contribute to usefulness. For these objects he employed his time diligently while abroad, and especially at Rome. Evident proof of this is found in his book, and much that is not written there is written upon the hearts and memories of his companions. The travelling party while at Rome consisted of six; and of these the gentlemen were accustomed to say that, when they sallied out in quest of knowledge, they must take care to go with Dr. Fisk, as he would be sure, by some means or other, to find out what was worth seeing and remembering. But, while intent upon improvement, he was not less assiduous to please and oblige.

Mrs. Fisk delights now to recall his image as he stood on an architrave supported by columns more than 28 feet high, among the ruins at Pæstum, throwing down some moss, which she had expressed a desire to carry home as a *souvenir*.

Having remained long enough in Rome to see the principal curiosities, they started, on the 25th of April, for the more northern part of Italy. Arriving again at Florence, Dr. Fisk wrote the following letter to a lady in Middletown. It shows what were his feelings while in this land of romance and of song.

" Florence, May 1, 1836.

" MY DEAR MADAM,

" I believe I made something like a promise to you that I would write to you from Italy. At any rate, there rests upon my conscience a vague impression of that kind, which I cannot well dispose of without writing at least an apology for a letter. Perhaps you may decline receiving a letter written for *conscience*' sake, or an apology for a letter. However, in this land of falsehood, where ingenious lying passes for a virtue, common lying for common honesty, and religious imposition for pious fraud, I am thankful that I have so much conscience left ; and as for accepting an apology for a letter, you could not, if you knew my circumstances, expect much more. You would not, of course, expect me to rhapsodize or poetize. Even Italy cannot make a poet of me ! Besides, I am so much in the habit of giving my attention to the social and moral condition and associations of the inhabitants of a country, that any special defects in these cast a gloomy aspect over the physical beauties of the country itself. Such is the case in Italy. This country has its physical beauties, natural and artificial ; but these, even, have been overrated. Take, for example, the far-famed Italian sky : a subject alluded to, I recollect, at the time you expressed a wish to have a letter from Italy. This sky has obtained its credit from English authors, who, coming from the murky atmosphere of their fog-wrapped islands, are astonished and charmed at the beauty and brightness of an Italian sky. But I may say, I think, with the greatest safety, that if I have seen a sky

in Italy to equal, I certainly have not seen one to excel an American sky. I almost doubt whether the ethereal canopy of America is surpassed by that of any other country on the globe; and yet Americans, when they come here, must at least imagine that they see surprising beauties in the cerulean of Italy, merely because poets and novelists have associated these skies with the glowing descriptions of genius, and intertwined them, in connexion with all their studded brilliants, with wreaths and garlands of fancy.

"Italy has her landscapes, her mountain scenery, her cascades, her lakes, her valleys festooned with vines, her hills crowned with olives, and her orangeries resplendent with golden fruit. All these, moreover, are set off by the most skilful and expensive efforts of art. This country, too, has her works of art in the greatest perfection. It is needless to repeat what all the world knows, that the finest products of the chisel and of the pencil are here; and, above all, here are classic associations, historic monuments, and remains of antiquity, which, more than anything else, interest me. It is thus, and in connexion with these, that the spectator is enabled to bring down to the present times the most renowned and polished of the ancients. All these are presented to the mind of the traveller, and, with these to entertain him, it might be supposed, perhaps, that the pleasure of visiting Italy would be very great. But there are still other parts in this exhibition, other colours in this picture. Some of your finest antiquities are surrounded by filth the most loathsome, and you gratify the sight of the eye at the expense of the olfactories. You see, too, among the splendid ruins of the Coliseum and of the Palatine Hill, squalid poverty picking off vermin from greasy rags and skins. Wherever you go, you are followed by a host of beggars, whose wants you cannot supply, and whose importunities, backed as they are by the most evident tokens of wretchedness, you can hardly have a heart to repel. You see some of the most fertile valleys tilled by companies of wretched-looking females, with one or two lazy-looking male overseers, having long canes to chastise them into industry if they are found too dilatory. You see, in fine, the whole population given up to a most de-

grading and, I may say, in many instances, most disgusting superstition, on the one hand, and a lax, licentious morality on the other. All these things are here, and, being here, you may judge whether, with my feelings, I could be expected to deal much in rhapsody, or feel the inspiration of poesy, even under the influence of all that is inspiring in Italy. Since, then, you cannot expect, on the other hand, in the short compass of a sheet, a detail of particulars, and especially since my sheet is already full, you will be kind enough to accept this apology for a letter, and wait for particulars until I return."*

They visited, while in Florence, that rare institution for Italy, the Lancasterian School, under the patronage of the Marquis Torrigiani, who, in his visit to the United States, had seen the effect of education upon the poorer classes, and on his return had attempted to introduce it into his own country. From this philanthropic nobleman they received very polite attentions. They also formed an interesting acquaintance with Mademoiselle Callandrini, the noble originator of infant-schools in this benighted region. Dr. Fisk received two letters from her, explaining her operations, her difficulties, and prospects, which would, no doubt, be acceptable to our readers, but we should not, without her permission, deem it proper to make them public.

From the capital of the kingdom of the iron crown,† Dr. Fisk addressed the following letter to Professor Johnston, of the Wesleyan University :

"Milan, May 21, 1836.

"MY DEAR PROFESSOR,

"I am now on the eve of recrossing the mighty barriers of the Alps, I hope for the last time. I am tired of journeying, especially among a people of a strange tongue, although

* This letter was sent by the hands of Mr. William J. Webb, whose melancholy fate is related by Dr. Fisk at page 352 of his *Travels*. It is remarkable, that of the six who formed their party in Rome, only two are now living.

† All have heard of the iron crown of Lombardy, but all do not know that it is so called "from a small ring of iron, said to be made of a nail of the true cross, placed upon the interior of a circlet of gold."—Dr. Fisk's *Travels*, p. 393, *note*.

it must be confessed that Italy is now just clad with her charms. The winter has been severe, and much of the interest of the country has been lost ; but now it is clad in a most luxuriant robe of verdure, such as in our country is not known. The weather is temperate, and the whole scene is enchanting. We have just now—three days since—arrived from Venice, having travelled the whole length almost of this luxuriant valley of Normandy. There is, perhaps, nothing finer of the same extent in the wide world. However, I ought to bear in mind that I have as yet seen but a little part of the world. This city, the capital of Lombardy now, as it was of Napoleon's kingdom of Italy formerly, is a beautiful city, and the more so for the masterly touches of Napoleon's improving hand, who has left the impress of his genius, of his power, and of his taste on every part of this country. His power is gone ; and as his mind, insatiate with power, was ever grasping after more, we ought not to regret, perhaps, that his power is gone ; but the works of his hands will live while the world stands ; and the impulse he has given to society here is felt and must be felt more and more, notwithstanding the leaden sceptre of Austria, which presses upon public sentiment and upon the buoyant tendency of mind like an incubus. It is impossible to stop the progress of mind ; and if other revolutions do not burst the chains of Austrian despotism, an event by no means improbable, still the march of mind will go on. As Galileo said, when, by compulsion, he was obliged to sign his recantation of the true astronomical theory, 'The world will go round for all that,' so one may say of the *policy* of Metternich, 'The principles of intellectual emancipation *will go round and go on* for all that.' Venice is in its decline, and must ultimately go back into the *lagunes* whence it arose. The time may be distant, but at some day, if the world stands, the waves of the Adriatic will again sweep over the islets of the present site of Venice as they did before the fierce arms of Attila and other barbarians drove the fugitives of Italy to steal from Neptune a refuge from tyranny. But I cannot enlarge now. We shall leave here, Providence permitting, in one or two days ; shall visit Lakes Como and Maggiore ;

prepare to reach Geneva, by the Simplon, on the first of June ; pass down the Rhine, and be in London by the 15th or 20th, where we hope to hear from home.

" I have sent a box of Vesuvius minerals* by Mr. W. J. Webb, who, poor man, is, I fear, almost gone with the consumption. He was to have sailed by the 10th instant from Leghorn. You can open the box if it arrive. I hope to get some more in Switzerland. Pray how does your department prosper ? Will you write me in England ? Our kind love to your lady, and also to all the professors and their families, to students, and to other friends. I think of you all much, and hope to see you again in the flesh, and join you in your work. Our health is good. Be pleased to see Mrs. Fisk's mother, and inform her of our health, and give her our love. Yours in haste, as it is time for the mail to close.

W. FISK."

Dr. Fisk was remarkable for his attachment to his native land. The feeling had been instilled into his mind from his early childhood by both his parents, so that the *love of country* was more a passion with him than a sentiment. This feeling is never more vividly called out than while travelling in foreign lands, and is frequently brought into activity by comparative trifles. We cannot forbear noticing an instance of this power of trifles over the associations while our travellers were at Bavena, on the shore of Lake Maggiore, on the eve of their departure from Italy. At a comfortable inn, where they passed the night, a *wooden floor* to their room gave them more of a *home-feeling* than anything they had met with for a long time. It was the first wooden floor they had seen in five months. The water scenery, the distant mountains, the trout of the lake, and the *wooden floor*, carried the thoughts of our travellers across the Atlantic, and they retired to rest sighing for their New-England home. Their feelings are expressed in the words of a native poetess :

* This arrived safely, and the specimens are now in the cabinet of the University.

"Though warm hearts have cherish'd the exile
In moments of sorrow and pain,
There's a home in the heart of New-England,
Oh! when shall I see it again."—*Mrs. Osgood.*

And here we shall venture a few general observations on Dr. Fisk's account of his travels in this region. In estimating this portion of his work, reference must be had, as has been before intimated, to his character and aims. He was evidently more interested in the history, religion, morals, literature, and physical condition of the countries he passed through, than in the objects which more generally attract tourists. He was more interested in men than in things; but, though he gave a subordinate place to the fine arts, yet he did not despise, nor entirely neglect them. He visited them for the sake of information, and spoke of them rather as they impressed the mind of a person of a busy, active, useful life, than that of a professed connoisseur. To the latter he made no pretensions; he even expressly disclaims it. We can, therefore, see neither justice nor liberality in the remarks some were disposed to make on his meager descriptions of the fine arts in Italy. An author is not to blame for failing to accomplish what does not come within his design. If his design do not please us, or suit our taste, we lay the book down; but why, on that account, should we impeach its excellence? We think not the less of Sir Humphrey Davy as a philosopher on account of his insensibility to the beauties of the Louvre, nor do we admire the philanthropy of Howard the less because, when he visited Greece on his errand of benevolence, he did not turn aside to view the remains of the Parthenon and the Acropolis, nor kindle with rapture amid the remains of the Academy or the Lyceum, or on the classic banks of the Ilissus. Yet Howard was a man of taste and of fortune, and of no mean attainments in science. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society. Our traveller visited whatever was worthy of observation in his tour, and speaks of what he saw; but it was in accordance with his professed character and purposes. This is all we ought to expect.

In portraying the condition of the people, our tourist was evidently more at home than in describing the productions

of the chisel and the pencil. To this he principally turned his attention, and his observations are valuable. The compendium of the history of Italy, the description of the Romish ceremonies of Passion Week, the exhibition of the moral, political, and religious, as well as literary state of the country; his remarks on the causes and cure of these evils, evince observation, thought, research, and great industry, especially considering that this was all done in, as it were, a flying journey of a few months' duration. Indeed, if any one desire a correct apprehension of the actual condition of the Italian States, we know not where, in the same compass, he can be better and more agreeably informed than in Dr. Fisk's Travels; and if, in every particular, minute accuracy be not found, still these mistakes are so inconsiderable as to be no serious deduction from the value of the work, while the circumstances of the writer furnish an ample apology.

We might follow him with something of the same train of thought across those mountains,

"Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
And whitens with eternal sleet,"

as he took his course by way of the Simplon to Geneva. But here he is more in his element. The beauties of Nature always had charms for his understanding and his heart. Some beautiful touches of description are contained in this portion of his travels; but we cannot stay to repeat them, nor would it be justice to the reader.

In a passage so rapid as that under consideration, great amplitude of topical information could not be expected; yet the Travels are enlivened with many local descriptions, and especially by allusions to the chief historic associations connected with the places through which they passed; and thus, while he did not despise the interest created by the excitement of the imagination and sensibilities, yet he aimed chiefly at conveying information, especially such as accorded with his own character and habits of thinking. Many of his observations, though they be but hints, are well worth our attention, such as those on the influence upon morals, resources, and literature, exerted by the division of Italy and

Germany into so many petty independent sovereignties; and those on the inefficiency of the confederation existing among the Swiss cantons, so like the union of these states before the adoption of the Federal Constitution.

His tour through Switzerland is deeply interesting, especially his sojourn at Geneva, his visit at Basle to the patriarchal Dr. Blumhart, now no more, and his description of Count, or, as he prefers to be called, Mr. Fellenberg's establishment at Hofwyl. Although we have determined not to introduce anything from the Travels into this work, yet we must break our rule in one particular. Dr. Fisk's remarks upon the government of the Hofwyl school are so just an exhibition of his own principles and practice, that we think the reader will be pleased to see them, for the sake of the portrait which they give of himself as governor of an institution of learning.

"As Mr. Fellenberg is sole proprietor, so he is absolute governor of this institution, or, more properly, he is the father of this family, for the government is truly patriarchal. All the subordinate teachers are solely under his control, and all the students look up to him as the common father; all needful liberty is given to throw them, in a proper degree, upon their own responsibility, and yet due care is taken to follow them with such a parental solicitude as to prevent them from being exposed to too strong temptations, and with the view to call their attention, speedily and kindly, to the beginnings of error. This trains their moral feelings, calls conscience into action, and teaches them to resist temptation, not for wrath, but for conscience' sake. This is the very reverse of the French system of government. They put their *élèves* under a lock and key, and trust almost entirely to seclusion and physical restraints to guard their morals and habits. This prevents the *overt act* of moral delinquency, but causes, on the one hand, a rank growth of many of the nascent passions, and, on the other, effectually excludes all education of conscience and the moral feelings. The truth is, there are two wrong ways, and but one right way, of governing a literary institution. The two wrong ways are the easiest for the instructor, but are both equally

ruinous to the pupil. They appear to have been adopted with a view to the good of the student, but with a design to secure some good to him with the least possible trouble to the teacher. The first of these is that of the French, already alluded to, and is the same with that of most Catholic countries, and is a part of the same system that encourages convents and monasteries ; founded, in fact, upon that anti-scriptural doctrine, that we are to be 'kept from the evil of the world' by being 'taken out of the world.' True, if you put your pupil in prison, he will not get out to do any mischief, if your locks and walls are safe ; but when he gets out, whether by stealth or at the time of his legal enlargement, you may be quite sure he will do mischief with but little remorse.

"The other extreme is to give the student up entirely to his own responsibility, under the sanction of fixed penal laws. This is nearly the plan of the English, and too many of the American universities and colleges. This, too, is an easy process ; for it takes much less time to decide a case and affix a penalty in view of a *fixed statute*, than it does to look after the exposed youth with a parental eye ; to fortify his mind with the strong persuasives and dissuasives of moral and religious obligation, and to call his attention to the elements of sin in his heart, and the earliest deviations of his practice. Yet this latter is the true course. The man who is not willing to watch with a vigilance that never sleeps, and to rebuke and exhort, persuade and correct, with a diligence that never tires, is not the man to have the care of youth. Mr. Fellenberg adopts the *right course*. To parental authority and counsels he adds the obligations of religion ; indeed, religion, not in its controverted dogmas, but in its moral precepts and holy sanctions, is made a prominent part of instruction ; and thus, like the hydraulic works of Fair Mount, near the City of Philadelphia,* the very element that is elevated into the moral reservoir of the soul for future usefulness, furnishes the power also by which the process itself is conducted with regularity, beauty, and efficient.

* "In these works, the same river, the water of which is elevated to be conveyed into the city, furnishes also the water-power for their elevation."

cy." In one point only Dr. Fisk thought the Hofwyl system of moral instruction deficient, which is, that it does not inculcate a change of heart. In this it is inferior to many of the American institutions.

We must again refer our readers to the *Travels* for an account of the passage down the Rhine, and for his remarks on the libraries in Germany, and the Prussian system of education. Meantime we hasten to rejoin them in London, where they arrived on the 28th of June. It was Dr. Fisk's original design to be in London in May, to attend the anniversaries, and especially since he was deputed, as before mentioned, to represent some of the religious associations of his own country—among others, the American Bible Society. But he found, while on the Continent, that his state of health rendered it inexpedient. The frequent calls to speak, with the fatigue of attending the meetings, and consequent mental excitement, would, no doubt, have been seriously detrimental to him.

During their second visit to the British metropolis, they found an agreeable home at the house of the Rev. Dr. Alder, of whose kindness, together with that of his lady, our travellers ever spoke in the warmest terms. Here they spent from two to three weeks, visiting the British Museum, Westminster Abbey, the Tower, and, in short, as far as time would allow, whatever was worth examining in this wonderful epitome of the nations. Dr. Fisk also visited the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge; but we need not repeat his observations on them.

In May of this year (1836), the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America appointed Dr. Fisk their delegate to attend the British Conference, which was to meet at Birmingham on the 27th of July. On the 19th of July, therefore, he left London, with Mrs. Fisk, for the seat of the Conference, intending to stop at some intermediate places. During this journey, a disagreeable incident convinced him that his sojourn in England was destined to be disturbed by some unkind offices, arising from a misapprehension of his views on the Slavery Question. A stranger informed him, while on the road, of a public meeting held the night before

in Birmingham, at which it was announced to the audience "that a Methodist bishop was expected at Birmingham in a few days, as a delegate to the Wesleyan Conference; that he was sent by a pro-slavery party in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and was himself an advocate for slavery; and, as my informant understood it, and as one of the public journals afterward reported it, it was also added that this bishop was a slaveholder. The name of the gentleman was called for by some one in the assembly, that he might be known, and treated accordingly when he should arrive. *Bishop Fisk*, was the reply." The stranger also "intimated that it would be very unpleasant, if not unsafe, for the American bishop to show himself in Birmingham, as he would meet with rough treatment." Dr. Fisk informed him that he "did not claim to be a bishop" (he had been elected in his absence by the General Conference, but was not ordained); "yet, as I was the delegate from the Methodist Episcopal Church to the Wesleyan Conference about to be held at Birmingham, I supposed I must be the person alluded to; that I should not take any pains to hide myself from the good people of Birmingham; and, therefore, they should have full opportunity of doing all their pleasure in the case."

This was not all. The principal agent in this affair, Mr. Sturge, who has since paid a visit to the United States, took the pains to send a printed circular to each member of the Conference, giving his own mistaken views of Dr. Fisk's character and position in regard to the agitated question; and when he found that he had failed of attaining his object with the Conference, he sent another circular expressive of his dissatisfaction and indignation. Leaving the subject out of view in our estimate of this transaction, every candid mind will admit that such an intermeddling in the affairs of a body with which he had no sort of connexion, was in the highest degree officious, pragmatical, and arrogant.

But all this was by no means so trying to Dr. Fisk's feelings as a memorial which was sent by some members of several American Conferences to the British Conference on this painful subject. It was signed by eighty-five names. This document, though, as is claimed by the signers, it was

not so intended, was yet precisely adapted to create a prejudice against Dr. Fisk, and prevent his cordial reception by his brethren and the British public. He felt this the more keenly, because many of the signers were those with whom he had long been on the most intimate terms, and on some of them he had conferred particular obligations. Perhaps, in the whole course of his life, nothing ever affected him so painfully as this transaction. Yet, while under the anguish of lacerated feeling, his prayer was, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

But, whatever influence this document may have had with individuals, the Conference was too high-minded and honourable a body to listen to or entertain it; they decided that it would be improper for them officially to receive communications from single Conferences or portions of Conferences while in regular correspondence with the entire body. The document, therefore, was not allowed to be read. This decision was made spontaneously, when Dr. Fisk was absent, to whom, afterward, the paper was handed by the president.

A touching proof of Christian virtue follows. On the day of this painful transaction, the family whose hospitality Dr. and Mrs. Fisk enjoyed had invited company to dinner. Dr. Bunting was among the guests. With his usual cheerfulness and self-command, Dr. Fisk appeared in the drawing-room and at the table. In the course of conversation, Dr. Bunting mentioned the offensive document, and expressed his disapprobation of the measure, when "Dr. Fisk," says Mrs. F., "with his peculiar sweetness, replied, 'I know those brethren, doctor. They are good men. They have doubtless meant well, though their zeal for the slave seems, with them, to be the sundering of all other ties, and the all-absorbing principle of goodness.'" To the same purport was his communication concerning it in the *Advocate*; but that was for the public eye, and this in private intercourse, while the wound in his feelings was just inflicted.

Notwithstanding these efforts, Dr. Fisk was received by the Conference with a very gratifying cordiality and respect. For this he was no doubt, in part at least, indebted to the

characteristic magnanimity of their president. On his introduction to the body in his official character, which had taken place before the arrival of the aforesaid memorial, in the course of his remarks he explained the attitude of the American connexion in reference to slavery, and explained its administration of discipline on this subject. On his conclusion, the Conference expressed themselves satisfied, admitting that, so far as ecclesiastical action was concerned, the Methodist Church in America had done more than the Wesleyans in England, since the instructions given to their missionaries to the West Indies were to preach the Gospel, and not intermeddle with their civil relations. To these views Dr. Bunting assented; adding, however, a wish that the late General Conference had reiterated its disapprobation of the system of slavery, but admitted, nevertheless, that it did not become their nation "to interfere and dictate in this matter, and especially to send agents to the United States to agitate the public mind."* This course was highly judicious and honourable. The consequence will be, we trust, a perpetuation of those friendly relations that have ever existed between the two bodies, which tend to the interest of the two countries, as well as to the benefit of our common Christianity. May the Wesleyan family be one throughout the world!

Dr. Fisk's visit to the British Conference marks an era by a slight though interesting change in their manner of setting apart their ministers. Hitherto, after a strict examination before the Conference, and afterward a public relation of their religious exercises, and an account of their spiritual call to the ministry, they were simply recognised by the president as ministers in full standing. At this Conference the question of ordaining by the imposition of hands was discussed, and, being called on by Dr. Bunting, Dr. Fisk stated the views and practice of the Wesleyan body in the United States. The subject elicited considerable discussion, but the form was finally adopted.

While attending the Conference, our travellers made their home at West Bromwich, a few miles from Birmingham,

* Dr. Fisk's Travels.

where they received the greatest kindness and attention from Mrs. Hartley and her amiable family. Part of the intervals of business was spent in examining the objects of interest around them, in seeking up reminiscences of Bishop Asbury, and inspecting the curiosities of the "toyshop of Europe." It was a season of great intellectual, as well as social and spiritual enjoyment. But those who wish to see the details can receive them from Dr. Fisk's own hand.

The day after Conference closed he took coach for London, whence, after another week spent in the Metropolis, he went to Bristol, to attend the meeting of the British Association for the Promotion of Science. Here he had the opportunity of identifying some of the most brilliant productions of the age with their respective authors by ocular association. He was happy also to see his own country creditably represented by Dr. Hare, of Philadelphia, and his own denomination honoured by Thomas Exley, Esq., of Bristol, brother-in-law of the late Dr. Adam Clarke. But we need not repeat the particulars.

Dr. Fisk spent ten delightful days in Bristol, hospitably and most agreeably entertained at the house of J. Irving, Esq., where he enjoyed the additional pleasure of the society of his friend, Dr. Bunting. On the 30th of August our travellers left Bristol for Ireland, visited the Giant's Causeway, crossed over to Scotland, and spent a few days at Glasgow, where a letter from Professor Torrey, of New-York, procured them the acquaintance of Sir William J. Hooker, the celebrated botanist, since removed to the royal gardens at Kew, and then took an excursion through the Highlands. They returned to Liverpool on the 19th of October, whence they took passage for New-York in the same vessel which carried them out.

In all his travels, Dr. Fisk entertained a most grateful sense of the kindness shown him at the different places where he stopped. From the very few private memorandums which he kept, we insert the following only as specimens.

"Left Bristol August 30th, with much grief at parting with our dear and excellent friends at the Prospect House, and Mrs. A. of London; their excellent spirits partake of

the joys of yon bright world. How delightful will be our meeting in our Father's mansion above! Who can describe the pleasure of such friends in a strange land? none but those who have felt their need: *never, never let me forget strangers.*"

"October 1. Left Roundhay with many regrets. The week spent there was among the happiest in England. The local situation, refined society, cultivated taste, Christian simplicity and sincerity, rendered it almost a little earthly paradise. But the *hour of parting* proves to us all that this world is not our home: we seek one above."

Dr. Fisk was very busily employed during his entire sojourn in England. Besides fulfilling his various engagements, public and private, gaining information, and the like, he kept up an extensive correspondence, and wrote many articles for different periodicals. And on taking leave of the country, he, at the request of several friends, ministers and laymen, wrote an excellent paper on "Methodist Education in America." It was published in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, and copied into the Christian Advocate at New-York.

The following letter shows his feelings on receiving intelligence of the melancholy death of his friend and fellow-traveller, Mr. William J. Webb. It was written to Professor Augustus W. Smith, of the Wesleyan University.

"Manchester, October 6, 1836.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your very welcome letter reached us at Manchester on the 1st instant. We are under great obligations to you for writing, as it afforded us great interest to hear from you again. A part, however, was a painful interest. A report of five deaths, of which we had not before heard, in one letter, and that, too, from among our friends and intimate acquaintances, was certainly an unexpected and mournful message. Poor Mr. Webb! I feared, I almost predicted the result when he left us. I *hoped*, however, he would reach home. What must he have suffered! I almost fear I was deficient in my duty to him. He had a great flow of spir-

its, but at times was depressed. Often after prayer—for we used to have prayers in our little travelling household—he would be seen wiping his watery eyes, and would often talk freely about his religious standing. He expressed to me, more than once, his hope of an interest above. But when I parted with him at Florence, my heart was so swelling, bursting full, I could not speak. He, too, was almost speechless. We mutually pressed each other's hands, sighed a farewell, and parted : my own conviction at the time being, whatever he might have thought, that I should see his face no more until we should meet at the last day. The very remembrance of our connected journeyings, and visits to the ruins of Rome, and over the plains and mountains of Italy, is darkened by the associations of his feebleness and sufferings, and consequent death. But I must change the subject ; it is insupportable ! My feelings can never be realized by those who have never met in a foreign land, and felt all the sympathy which friendship and suffering will, under such circumstances, produce. Peace to the shade of the lovely, the intelligent, the kind and friendly-hearted, and, therefore, the more lamented Webb. Say to his brother I feel *for* him and *with* him in this, and the, to him, still more painful loss of his amiable and excellent wife. I would write to him, but I *cannot*. I feel unmanned on this subject, and cannot dwell upon it.

“ I shall embark for America, God willing, in the same ship I came out in (Roscoe, Captain Delano), on the 24th instant. I rejoice that my time is so near, and yet I feel miserable whenever I allow myself to think of it, in view of the weeks of misery that await me on the mighty deep ; but *home* is in the distance, and God reigns.

“ I find the climate disagrees with me more and more as the autumn advances.”

We could not, in our own estimation, do justice to this part of our subject, without making a few general remarks on this portion of his history. Considering the circumstances under which Dr. Fisk appeared before the British public, especially at Birmingham, he always felt that he had reason

to be gratified with his reception in England; and, according to universal testimony, the impression he made for piety, talents, and learning was highly favourable. Yet it may be doubted whether, while there, he was quite equal to himself. Perhaps this is only partially true. His sermon before the Conference, on the subject, "Lord, what is man?" &c., was not, as we have understood, one of his happiest efforts. It was regarded as a philosophic disquisition on the nature of man rather than such a discourse as is expected before their assembled Conference.* But he fully retrieved himself subsequently, in a sermon from Isaiah, xii., 1, "O Lord, I will praise thee; though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is passed away, and thou comfortest me." This was a delightful sermon, richly fraught with evangelical truth and Christian emotion. His charge, also, delivered in London at the ordination of certain young missionaries for the foreign service, was a highly efficient performance. The London Watchman, who published it entire, says, "Both from its intrinsic excellence, and the most impressive manner in which it was delivered, it is likely long to continue in the remembrance of those who had the pleasure of hearing it." The copy was not furnished by Dr. Fisk. It was taken down at the time of its delivery by a young minister, who did himself so much credit by its near approach to accuracy, that the author declined rewriting it. He preached in England altogether twenty-eight times, besides delivering various public addresses.

In estimating Dr. Fisk as a tourist, regard ought to be had to the institutions and habits of his own country. It is, perhaps, impossible for travellers fully to divest themselves of the bias arising from previous circumstances and opinions; and it is equally impossible for a reader to appreciate the remarks of a traveller, unless he understands his character

* This sermon was delivered in the Chapel where the Conference had been sitting all day, by which the air had been rendered impure. Impure air or want of proper ventilation always affected his feeble lungs very painfully. Before preaching, he expressed a doubt whether he should be able to speak at all. This prevented his usual animation. Indeed, he never preached, even under favourable circumstances, without great exhaustion and severe pain. Hence he frequently remarked, that he wished it was customary to have sofas in our pulpits, that he might lie down immediately on concluding.

and associations. His remarks portray himself as much as the people he describes. An Englishman is not quite pleased with everything he sees here. There are corresponding reasons why an American is not exactly pleased with all he finds there. England has all the features of an old monarchy and an hereditary aristocracy; the United States have the features of a young republic. The institutions of each country are the representations of the spirit of the people, and they serve, at the same time, to perpetuate that spirit which originated them. Let us fix this in our minds, and no nation need be very solicitous about the remarks of travellers. Such remarks, perhaps, should be omitted, unless we are certain that they are founded on a philosophic basis, or upon some principle held in common. In regard to the latter, we shall not be likely to agree in our conclusions unless we start from the same premises; and without the former, we shall have no safe standard of judgment; but to establish such a standard, it would be necessary to investigate the primal elements of moral, political, and economic science.

As Dr. Fisk appeared in an official capacity before the British Wesleyan Conference, it is no wonder that much of his attention was bestowed on the affairs of British Methodism; hence a considerable portion of what relates to England is upon this topic. This is viewed differently by different persons, according to their interest or otherwise in the subject. To many, even of our own people, a good deal of it was new; others were interested in it as a matter of general information touching a sister denomination; and some, perhaps, were interested in it from no very creditable motives. Such, at least, we infer from a certain review of the work, in which some of the peculiarities of Wesleyan Methodism are paraded with an air of illiberal triumph. The reviewer makes Mr. Wesley's "poll-deed" the especial object of his attack, forgetting, or not knowing, that under the British Constitution this was deemed the best, and, perhaps, the only method by which the connexion could be held together after Mr. Wesley's decease. It was necessary, in order to obtain a charter, to insert the names of some responsible persons; and Mr. Wesley nominated one hundred, un-

der the designation of the Conference, whose names were inserted, with a provision to supply vacancies, and who are thus constituted the legal representatives of the whole body. But, though these are the Conference known in law, yet, in transacting the general business of the connexion, all the ministers in full standing meet with them, and have the privilege of speaking and voting; but it is not true, as this reviewer would fain have his readers believe, that the chapels are all deeded to the Conference. The church property is held, as with us, by certain private members, in trust for the use of the people, but with a proviso securing to the Conference the right of supplying the pulpit.

The reviewer is, in his own opinion, severe—very—upon the nature of the Wesleyan formulary of doctrine. Instead of drawing up sundry specific articles in the form of a Confession of Faith or Catechism, they simply take Mr. Wesley's doctrinal sermons, and his plain, terse, comprehensive notes on the New Testament, as their standard. Yet it is evident they do not require conformity in every minute point, but only in the leading doctrines of the evangelic plan, leaving a reasonable latitude of construction in the minor details; but on the cardinal points, like ourselves, they allow no double construction, no retaining of the form of words with a diversified understanding of them. In all the essential points, the "Watchmen see eye to eye." There is, therefore, no danger, in exhibiting the plan of salvation, of their contradicting one another, and, by such contradictions, of involving their hearers in confusion of mind, or distraction, or despair, or insanity. "The trumpet gives a certain sound," and each one is made to know distinctly "how to prepare himself for the battle." This is excellent. We wish it was universally the case in the churches of Christendom.

The reviewer misunderstands another point; in regard, we mean, to the right of the Conference to station the preachers. True, they have the *legal* right; but, in fact, as the Travels themselves show, the appointments are all read out in *open* Conference, that is, before all the assembled ministers, amounting to from two to four hundred, as the case may be, where every man has the privilege of objecting to

his appointment at pleasure, and when everything is adjusted as nearly as possible to general satisfaction. If those concerned are satisfied with this arrangement, we know not why our reviewer should feel any particular anxiety about it.*

With the Wesleyan ministers as a body, Dr. Fisk was much pleased. In point of talent, education, and theological acquirements, he considered them, in the aggregate, superior to our own; and he predicted a still greater advancement from their recently-erected Theological Institution—a prediction which appears likely to be accomplished. In the pulpit he thought them, in manner, less natural and easy than ours, and also less urgent in exhortation to an immediate religious life. But, so far as my own information may be relied on, their preaching is quite as spiritual and evangelical as our own.

One observation in relation to the Wesleyan ministers, we perceived, attracted some little attention in certain quarters. The doctor thought that they seemed to be the happiest and most robust class of men he had ever met with. This is no doubt owing, besides the cheerfulness of their piety, in a great degree, to their peculiar manner of life. They are very laborious men; but then their system requires such an equal exercise of the mental and bodily faculties as is peculiarly favourable to health, vigour, and vivacity. As a body, they are very early risers; so that they secure time for the various duties of their vocation, and often walk their circuits, though their appointments may be from four to ten miles apart. By thus observing the laws of our complex nature, they secure important advantages. They perceive no connexion between a devout heart and a puny frame or a cadaverous countenance. They do not fit themselves for the tomb that they may get ready to live.†

* My remarks here are directed against an article put forth in the dying gasp of the *Christian Spectator*. A more illiberal, unfair, malignant article we have seldom read. Without drawing out the peculiar merits of the book, the reviewer has ransacked it thoroughly to find defects, and parades them with infinite complacency before the reader. By such a process any work might be condemned.

† We are sorry our British brethren took any offence at Dr. Fisk's remark on this point. Had they seen the childlike simplicity with which he sometimes ut-

Much, also, may be ascribed to their freedom from fretting anxieties. The preacher's family is well provided for; his house is furnished with every convenience; his children are sent to school, and an appropriation is always made for the hire of a domestic. The people thus enjoy the labours of an unencumbered, undistracted mind, and the preacher pursues his work with alacrity and with unimpaired faculties. There is, perhaps, no happier body of men to be found than the British Wesleyan ministers.

The above facts, taken in connexion with the absence of what we technically call locations, produce another good effect. A large proportion of their ministers retain their standing, usefulness, and influence to a good old age. The younger men grow up around them, look up to them as fathers, and yield them reverence and respect. With us, owing, in part, to a comparative lack of aged men, the young men are necessarily called to perform more important parts in the work, and are thus thrown into greater prominence. They are obliged to take too soon the position which of right belongs to age and experience. This, I believe, rather than any moral obliquity, and more than our republican form of government, produces what some have esteemed an irreverence for age. Still, even the appearance of this vice is so unlovely that it ought to be carefully guarded against. We ought not only to avoid all evil, but even "all appearance of evil."

Dr. Fisk was struck with another peculiarity in British Methodism. A difference of opinion, as is known to many, exists among them on the comparative utility of revivals. One preacher seriously asked him if he thought "revivals are, *on the whole*, advantageous to the Church." We suppose the question must have contemplated a comparison between occasional excitements of religious interest and a steady progression of the work of piety, including the spiritual advancement of the Church, and constant accessions of newly converted persons. Upon this question there may be a difference of opinion without impeachment of religious

tered such little pleasantries—for it was nothing more—they could not have felt aggrieved. But it is impossible to print a smile.

character. A *revival* implies a previous deadness ; and where there is deadness in religion, no one who favours religion will deny the utility of a coming to life, or a revival. But still is it possible, by faithful, spiritual, evangelical preaching, to maintain such a constancy of vital warmth and activity in a church, that a revival, properly so called, or a coming to life again, may be precluded ? Now, for ourselves, we should like to hear that question discussed by two persons intellectually and spiritually qualified to do it justice. Yet, on the general question put to Dr. Fisk, there can be but one opinion among men properly qualified to judge. Revivals have, on the whole, done immense good, from the times of the apostles to the present age ; and although many who are converted in revivals fall away, yet not more, perhaps, in proportion to the whole number, than apostatize where the work is more gradual and protracted. Meantime thousands are added to the churches that otherwise, perhaps, would not become religious at all.

Dr. Fisk often spoke of the personal piety of the British ministers, their urbanity of manners, sweetness of spirit, and beauty of character. He felt deeply their Christian kindness and attentions. In conversing on the subject, he would often say, "How it increases the value of Christianity to believe that we shall meet them all again. Yes ! to part no more." He often said that "there were some in their body who were among the purest models of Christianity he had ever seen." Of some of their aged men, as the Reverend Messrs. Entwisle and Wood, both now "entered into the joy of their Lord," and others of their class, he said, "They are the patriarchs of the body ; the spirit of the venerable Wesley is with them. Their sons rise up and call them blessed. They make me in love with old age. I am willing to be old if God will but bless me with their spirit." Of the excellent Dr. Bunting, who came from London to Manchester to take leave of him, and accompanied our travellers to the ship, he spoke in terms which it would be indelicate to record in the lifetime of that gentleman.

But we forbear. Perhaps we have already wearied the patience of the reader.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Voyage to New-York.—The Roscoe Herald.—Return Home.—Declines the Episcopate.—Revival.—Colleges and Academies.—Letters.—Aaron C. Bangs.—Hon. James G. Birney.—Dr. Fisk's Travels.—Abolition.—Letters.—Address on the Fourth of July.

WE left our travellers on board the packet ship Roscoe, pursuing their voyage homeward. As before, Dr. Fisk suffered severely from sea-sickness. He was, in fact, confined to his berth almost the whole time, until within a few hours of his landing, except only on the Lord's day. Was it a special providence that the Sabbaths were uniformly calm and fine, so that he was able to preach regularly on that day? At any rate, he availed himself of the opportunity, preaching every Sabbath to the passengers in the large cabin.

The few entries which he made in his memorandum-book during the voyage will be read with interest.

"Oct. 28th. Sick all day—the preceding night most distressing—rough, rolling sea.

"Oct. 29th. All day rough, rolling sea. Evening: winds more calm; become light, but contrary. Made but little progress through the night. Towards morning I became so restless and miserable that I could not remain in my berth. I got up, and, with my dear wife's assistance, dressed myself, and we went upon deck. The wind had changed; the moon shone brightly; the air was mild, and the sea tolerably calm. All was tranquillizing to the spirit and refreshing to the body. The demon of sea-sickness gave way, and a change came over the spirit of my nauseous, dreaming, giddy life. May a kind Heaven preserve me from that dreaded enemy for the rest of the voyage.

"A calm moonlight night at sea is lovely: we enjoyed it much. Our canvass was all spread. We had just wind enough to fill the sails. Our noble, gallant ship seemed like a thing of life, proudly careering on her native element, as if exulting that she was the only object to be discerned on this boundless expanse. Yet,

“ ‘How dark would be sea’s vale, and damp,
 Though *moon* beams bright and sweetly o’er us ;
 But Immortality’s pure lamp
 Gladdens and glides the scene before us.’

Truly, God is love. At sea, on land, in sickness or health, God is *love*.

“ Sunday, Oct. 30th. Winds light ; ship’s company all better. I read and expounded the twelfth of Romans ; had much liberty in enlarging upon the mercy of God, and the obligations we were laid under thereby to serve him. General attention and some tenderness. God grant that this bread cast upon the waters may be gathered after many days. What a place is the ocean to impress upon the mind of man his own littleness and his own dependance ! The word *Ocean* is a sermon of itself.

“ The passengers met last Saturday, Oct. 29th, and resolved upon a semi-weekly herald, to be called the ‘Roscoe Herald,’ to be issued every Tuesday and Friday. They also organized a government, appointed a judge, their officers, constable, &c. This is much better than some of their amusements. It is curious to see with what trifles people can be amused when at sea—anything to kill time. *Eternity*, as on land, is too often forgotten ; and yet nowhere, one would think, is eternity brought nearer.

“ Sunday, 13th. Calm again—service—too weary and sick to write.

“ Nov. 27th. After several days of rough weather, in which I was confined to my bed, we have at length a lovely day, and that day is the Sabbath. We had service : I endeavoured to expound from Col., 3d. Serious attention—hope some good may be done—have cast again bread upon the water—Jesus can bless it—too sick to write.”

Yet even the sea-sickness did not overcome his interest in the happiness of those around him. He was habitually not less an agreeable companion than a sympathizing friend and a wise counsellor. No one knew better how to combine cheerfulness with gravity, and to sustain the dignity of the ministerial character amid the relaxations of society. Of this he had opportunity of giving proof during the ordeal of a voyage across the Atlantic. His piety threw around him

no mantle of repulsiveness. He contributed his share to whatever innocent expedients were adopted to relieve the tedium of the passage. Of this the following is an instance: The first number of the Roscoe Herald was deficient in the poetical department, and at Mrs. Fisk's request, the doctor wrote the following lines for the "Poet's Corner." The reader ought to know that they were written in his berth, as he was too ill to sit up, and was scarcely able to guide his pen.

"THE ROSCOE HERALD.

"The 'Roscoe Herald'—who'll refuse it!
 Though born at sea, and rock'd on ocean—
 Must have a place, if poets choose it,
 Where they may breathe their soul's devotion;
 Where they may chant the waves among,
 In all the rhapsody of song.
 But who can catch the *inspiration*
 In circumstances such as these?
 Or who can hold a poet's station,
 When rock'd and toss'd on rolling seas,
 Till reeling sense and giddy brain
 Bind fancy in a leaden chain!
 Not that inspiring scenes are wanting
 To touch the heart or tune the lyre;
 For here are scenes quite as enchanting,
 As pregnant with poetic fire,
 As ever caught the poet's eye
 By land or sea, in earth or sky.
 Here undulating waves are rolling,
 With crests of spray and caps of foam;
 Here day and night, the hoarse winds howling,
 Through shrouds and spars make plaintive moan;
 While stormy peterels skim the air,
 And dolphins play and meteors glare.
 And here, in vessel's wake at even,
 In one broad belt of mystic light,
 Reflecting back a mimic heaven,
 Which dazzles as it charms the sight,
 Old ocean shows a milky way
 Of stellar light on dancing spray.
 The bright cerulean above,
 In canopy of heavenly blue,
 Bends down and round in melting love,
 To kiss this sea of kindred hue,
 And gazes through her eyes of light
 On him she loves, the livelong night.

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And when the clouds obscure the sky,
 And interrupt her raptured gaze,
 She weeps with many a tearful eye
 Through tedious nights and gloomy days,
 Sprinkling with dewdrops from above,
 The unseen object of her love.

Sure scenes like these might charm the muse
 To swell her notes in sweetest measure ;
 Dost ask, then, why should she refuse
 To contribute her share of pleasure ?
 Her harp's untuned in every string,
 She's *sea-sick*, and she *cannot* sing.

" Ship Roscoe, November, 1836."

The following document serves to show the estimation in which he was held by his fellow-voyagers :

" Packet ship Roscoe, near Sandy Hook, }
 Monday, November 21, 1836. }

" *Resolved*, that Messrs. Crane and Smith be requested to convey to the Rev. Dr. Fisk the grateful thanks of the captain and passengers of this vessel, for the obliging manner in which he (although suffering from sea-sickness and indisposition) complied with their wishes, by the performance of Divine service on board the Roscoe during her passage from Liverpool to New-York ; and also for the advice and instruction afforded to us in the lectures delivered by him, wherein he most impressively and consistently inculcated the invaluable doctrines of true piety, and ably advocated the spirit of Christian charity towards all mankind."

Our travellers landed in New-York on the 23d day of November (1836). They remained a few days in the city. On the Sabbath Dr. Fisk preached, greatly to the delight and edification of his audience, in the large church in Forsyth-street, on the appropriate text, " Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage."—Ps. cxix., 54. And on the succeeding evening, at the request of the Board of Managers of the Young Men's Missionary Society, he gave the result of his observations in the countries he had visited. The audience was very large and deeply interested. A detailed account of both these discourses was published in the

Christian Advocate and Journal. After the discourse, the audience, by an unanimous vote, requested the publication of his Travels.

Dr. Fisk's return to Middletown was hailed with unaffected joy. His voyage seemed to have accomplished all that was anticipated. His health appeared, to many, much improved. He had enriched the apparatus and library of the Wesleyan University with important additions, to the value of about seven thousand dollars, besides a handsome donation from the British Conference of books, among which were a complete set of the Arminian and Methodist Magazine, and the entire works of Richard Baxter, in 23 vols. 8vo, and Mr. Wesley's Christian Library. He also received benefactions from individuals in England, consisting of money, books, and contributions to the cabinet of Natural History.* But, besides these, he returned with a mind enriched by the results of foreign travel; a more extended intercourse with mankind, and with, in some respects, more enlarged views, and a valuable stock of information. His increased attractions had still more strongly drawn public attention to the Wesleyan University, the effect of which was a large accession to the number of students. The patrons and supporters of the institution looked forward to several years of efficient service from its beloved and revered president, upon whose account, and that of the institution, they had expended a liberal sum of money, and incurred heavy responsibility.

Their minds, however, were not entirely free from apprehension on this point. We have had occasion casually to observe that, at the General Conference held at Cincinnati during his absence, Dr. Fisk was elected to the episcopal office. His election was equally satisfactory to the North and to the South, a point of great importance at a time when a schism on the Slavery Question was feared by many, and when, consequently, it was not easy to find candidates for

* The museum of the Wesleyan University is also indebted, through Dr. Fisk's influence, to Dr. Prescott, of Lynn, Massachusetts, for a handsome collection of specimens in conchology and mineralogy, called after the donor, the Prescott Cabinet; and to Mr. Blackstock the library is indebted for the collection of books which belonged to his brother-in-law, the late Rev. John Summerfield.

the office acceptable to both parties. It was Dr. Fisk's earnest desire to make his apparently conflicting obligations harmonize, and he spared no pains to obtain suitable ground on which to make his decision. After earnest prayer, a careful review of the opposite claims upon him, and a correspondence with competent advisers, he announced his intention in the following letter to Dr. Bangs. It was published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, January 20th, 1837.

" To the Rev. Dr. Bangs, on the subject of his election to the Episcopal Office.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

" When I parted with you in New-York, you expressed a wish that, as soon as I could make up my mind on the subject of my election to the episcopal office, I would make that decision public. This you thought desirable, to meet the inquiries and satisfy the minds of many who were anxious to know the result. I have found some difficulty in satisfying myself with respect to this question. Since I entered upon the ministry, I have ever felt it both a duty and a privilege to fill that post and perform that labour, as I was able, which the constituted authorities of the Church were pleased to assign me ; and, although I consider this appointment as standing on different ground from the ordinary assignments of ministerial labour, still, even here, I think, in ordinary cases, the voice of the Church decisively expressed, in view of all the circumstances, should not be disregarded. There are circumstances, however, in the present case, which would justify me, I think, in declining, at least for the present, a consecration to the office of a bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I do not say that there may not be such a concurrence of circumstances, between this and the next General Conference, as would convince me that it was my duty to enter upon that office ; but at present my way is not clear in that direction. For this decision, the following are some of my reasons :

" 1. It seems that the General Conference were of the opinion, at the first, that only two additional bishops were

needed ; and only agreed upon a third after several of the older bishops had been excused from the full labour of efficient men. At present, however, most of these members of the Episcopal Board have, by arrangement, undertaken and entered upon their full proportion of episcopal labour. So long as they are able, therefore, to perform that labour, it would be going contrary to the wishes of the General Conference, unequivocally and officially expressed, to increase the board of bishops beyond the number already consecrated. If I have a right understanding of the subject, then the case is this : a third bishop was elected to meet a possible, or, perhaps, a probable exigency ; which exigency has not occurred, and may not occur for the next four years. To provide for that exigency, the General Conference were pleased to elect three. Being absent, of course I could not be consecrated when the others were. On my return, I find the exigency, without the expectation of which the election of a third new bishop never would have been ordered, does not exist. Should I not, then, be going contrary to the expressed wishes of the General Conference ? Should I not be guilty of a great breach of Christian modesty, and show a great want of a nice sense of propriety, if, under these circumstances, I should come forward and claim my consecration, and throw myself upon a board that is full, and all the joint labours of which are provided for, and, by God's blessing upon the health of the bishops (which may he richly bestow), will be performed for the next four years ? So, at least, it seems to me.

"2. Another reason (if an additional one were necessary) is, that, encouraged by the sanction of the authorities of the Church, I have come under such obligations, and incurred such responsibilities in my present station, as I cannot suddenly dispense with, without serious disappointment, and an apparent breach of confidence.

"3. My constitution is such, that, to all human appearance, I might calculate, with the fullest certainty, upon a *speedy* termination of my labours, if obliged to be exposed to all the varieties of climate, at any and all seasons of the year. This, if I believed the interests of the Church required it,

should not deter me ; for why should I not go into the hottest of the battle, and *fall* as well as others ? So long, however, as I cannot see that the interests of the Church do demand this at my hand, or at the hand of any one, I cannot see the propriety of volunteering a sacrifice that God hath not required.

"These, then, are the deliberate views I entertain on this subject : views which are the result of my best judgment, after all the light and counsel I have been able to obtain of men and at the throne of grace. You are at liberty to make such use of these as you may judge proper.

"With my most unfeigned acknowledgments to those of my brethren who have honoured me with their confidence, and with an earnest prayer for the prosperity and unity of the Church, I remain, as ever, your affectionate brother and fellow-labourer in the kingdom of Christ,

" W. FISK.

"Middletown, January 9th, 1837."

These reasons did not prove entirely satisfactory to all Dr. Fisk's friends, and some of them expressed their views to him by letter with sufficient plainness.* One, moreover, as-

* The following is an extract of a letter from Dr. Fisk to the Rev. Benjamin F. Drake, of Mississippi, in answer to one from that gentleman relating to this subject. It is dated January 8, 1836.

"I think you state the doctrine of submission to the General Conference rather too strongly. You compare it to a man's refusing, after having joined the travelling connexion, to take the appointment assigned him by a bishop ; only mine is a worse case, because I hesitate 'to obey the solemnly declared majority of the whole Church.' Now, my dear brother, this is not quite fair. When we join Conference, we do it in view of doing the work assigned by the bishop and by our 'chief minister.' This is the business of the itinerant—this he *promises*. But who ever promised to obey the call to the bishopric ? Who ever joined the connexion in view of this ? Certainly *not I*. Yet I concede a man should not, for slight reasons, *disobey* the voice of the Church. But it strikes me, *disobedience* is one thing, and *declining an appointment*, under some circumstances, another. But the severest part of your charge is, that I am 'depriving the Church of the labours of some efficient superintendent, who might have been elected in my place.' Have I placed the Church in this situation ? She appointed me to an office in my absence, not knowing my circumstances ; and, had I been present to state these, the General Conference might have excused me ; but they ventured on the appointment. Now, if your doctrine be *correct*, that we must take the appointment assigned us unless excused by the General Conference,

sured him that, if he would accept the office and would remove into Alabama, a purse of ten thousand dollars would be raised to procure him a comfortable residence. But such arguments did not weigh a feather with him. He had made up his mind on conscientious ground, and he could not be moved by inferior impulses. It may be observed, that though, in his letter to Dr. Bangs, he urges the first consideration at greatest length, yet the succeeding ones had no small weight with him.

Dr. Fisk now devoted himself with all his former assiduity to the duties of his station. The affairs of the institution, under the temporary presidency of Professor Smith, whose administration was highly satisfactory, had gone on prosperously. The number of students had increased, and additional buildings for their accommodation were wanted. All this augmented the labours of the president. It was interesting to observe with what facility he returned to his former routine of avocations after a period of long excitement. There was no appearance in him of listlessness, or distaste

then who has most cause to complain, I, who was unexpectedly appointed in my absence, and when I had other engagements and pledges on my hands, without giving me an opportunity of being heard, or the Church, which has not had my services as bishop in consequence of my declining or postponing consecration! And ought I, under such circumstances, to be chargeable with standing in the way of another man? I may be wrong, but I assure you I do not feel the force of that charge farther than that it pains me that any of my friends should bring it against me.

"Waiving this, however, I acknowledge that the opinion of the General Conference, solemnly expressed, has great weight with me, and would have still more if *persisted in* after learning all my circumstances, and yet more if, in addition, the connexion were actually suffering from a reliance upon me. With respect to my being chosen in view of a probable failure in the labours of the older bishops, that I do not say; I did not so understand it. I understood that *three* were agreed on, however, *because* the bishops asked indulgence; and I further understand that these very bishops, with the exception of Bishop Hedding, did, at the meeting of the Episcopal Board, *claim, and have allotted to them, their full share of episcopal labour for the coming four years*, by which arrangement the whole work was provided for and *officially disposed of*, and that, too, by giving each bishop only from five to six Conferences on an average per annum. There is no vacancy for me. I could attend no Conference only as a spectator and a visitor. Were I consecrated this moment, I could have no episcopal jurisdiction or official duty until the next General Conference. How, then, can it be said, my dear sir, that I am depriving the Church of the efficient services of another?"

for drudgery ; no reluctance to labour after the relaxation ; no relapse after the excitement had passed away. His mind was in too just an equipoise for that ; and he resumed his work as though he had enjoyed but a few days respite. There was scarcely any perceptible change in him, save what has been before mentioned. In the essential features of his character he was the same : the same in piety, humility, and simplicity. Those who were most intimate with him discovered no trace of elation, nor any betrayal of a conscious superiority. His affability was such as seemed always to place him upon an equality with those with whom he conversed. In this he frequently reminded one of what is said of the devout and amiable Fenelon, to whom, in several features, our subject bore no faint resemblance. "I have seen him," says Ramsay, "in a single day, mount and descend all ranks ; converse with the noble in their own language, preserving throughout his episcopal dignity, and then talk with the lowly, as a good father with his children, and this without effort or affectation."* Such was Dr. Fisk.

We are enabled, in this place, to add another illustration of a feature which we have already noticed—his catholic spirit. Firm he was in his attachment to his own Church, and tenacious of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel ; yet he well knew how to exercise a Christian charity to those who differed from him. He had long felt that there was an unnecessary distance between different sects of the Catholic Church, and he desired to see measures adopted that might unite them more closely together. In one of his sermons after his return from Europe, preached on the text, "By whom shall Jacob arise ? for he is small" (Amos, vii., 2), he alleged, as one of the causes of the comparatively slow advance of piety, and the dwarfish state of the Christian Church, a want of proper union in heart and effort among the different denominations ; and as this discourse was delivered in a Methodist church, there was no room for suspecting that he followed the example of those who preach liberality abroad, but bigotry at home. Dr. Fisk did not lay down rules for others that he was unwilling to follow him-

* Quoted from Mrs. Shelley's *Eminent French Writers*.

self. The following is from a letter written about this time to his old and tried friend, the Reverend John Lindsey :

"I am heartily convinced that there is too little union of feeling and of effort among Christians of different denominations, and that, until a change can be effected by some means on this point, the work of God in all its branches will be retarded. I therefore wish full success to all designs and efforts to increase 'Christian union.' With respect to the best means of accomplishing this, I have no mature thoughts or plans. It must certainly be of service, however, to bring it prominently before the Christian public in a way to excite public attention and inquiry. The evils of disunion should be presented and illustrated by facts, and the advantages of united effort should be portrayed. Hence some public agency or association on the subject, prudently managed, would seem desirable.

WILLBUR FISK.

"Middletown, December 17, 1836."

In the spring of 1837, the Methodist congregation in Middletown, under the pastoral care of the Rev. Charles K. True, was favoured with a blessed work of grace, in which the University largely participated. In this work Dr. Fisk was deeply interested, and seldom appeared to greater advantage. He laboured diligently and efficiently. It was delightful to see him, as the students came forward for prayers, singing, praying, and conversing with them, solely intent on leading them to the "Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world."

The character of his preaching at this season was remarkably appropriate and evangelical. Divested apparently of the stately forms of art, it was delivered with all that "simplicity, dignity, and directness" that indicate a pure solicitude for the triumph of truth. But then, conscious of the high import of his message, he threw into his sermons all his mental powers and resources. He selected for his themes the most familiar points of the evangelic plan, and with evident painstaking, laboured to bring them home to the understanding and the heart. Two very common faults of the

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pulpit he thus avoided : one is, the selection of topics so remotely connected with personal piety as to leave the conscience of the hearer untouched, and his feelings uninterested ; the other is, discussing more familiar themes in a manner so indifferent, and with such little effort of mind, and variety of thought and illustration, as to create an impression that the speaker is not interested in his own peculiar business. If he treated on the doctrine of repentance, or faith, or regeneration, it was with such clearness of statement and amplitude of scriptural illustration, as exhibited at once the experienced Christian and the able theologian. Such preaching will always be interesting to those who have a proper conception of the great end of the Gospel ministry. It is like a person mapping out a road for future travellers, over which he has passed himself until he has become familiar with all its waymarks.

Dr. Fisk's attention had been directed for some time to the relation existing between the colleges and academies under the control of the Methodist Church. He thought that, in many cases, a student remaining at an academy after he was sufficiently prepared to enter college, for the sake of entering a higher class, was detrimental to all parties. Under this conviction, he wrote, as a private letter to a principal of one of the academies, an article on the subject, which, on subsequent reflection, he sent to the *Christian Advocate and Journal*. This paper was not entirely satisfactory to some of the principals and teachers of the academies, and, in consequence, he received one or two letters asking an explanation. From the Rev. George (now Dr.) Peck, at that time at the head of the Cazenovia Seminary, he received a communication, to which the following is his reply :

" Middletown, July 12, 1837.

" MY DEAR BROTHER,

" Your views correspond with mine, I believe, exactly. If the providence of God interpose, and the student *cannot* go to college four years, then he must waive it, and do the next best way. I only wish these students might be impressed with the importance of making every exertion, and not suppose it is a matter of very little consequence whether they

go to college or not the first years of their course ; and even in the case proposed, it would be a grave question whether, in most instances, a thorough course in *part* of their studies would not be better than a hurried and an imperfect course in all, even if honoured with a degree by adopting the latter plan. This hurried and imperfect education is very much better than *none* ; but it does not *educate* the *mental powers* ; it gives them knowledge, and that is well ; but even this knowledge is not as likely to *stick* as though the ground was thoroughly prepared ; much less is it likely to bear as abundant a harvest in after life. This kind of education is the origin of most of the *ultraism* in the land. We are getting, in fact, to propel everything by steam, and hurry over the world with a railroad speed. Is it not so ? With regard to those who *cannot* or *will not* go to college at all, I think it very desirable that they have such advantages as can be furnished them in our high academies ; and in this respect I think these institutions are doing a vast amount of good in the Church and in the country. I do not wish them to cast off this class of scholars : I should think it would be a great calamity to do so. Persuade as many of them, however, to go to college as you can, and then do your *very best* with the others. You will perceive that my aim was not to disapprove of this, but to object to the academies' educating the young men in *our course*, and then sending them here for us to certify to their education by an official diploma. I did not say the 'outside row, when left to you, was as good as *lost*,' but that the college course would have an 'outside row' even if they entered sophomore or junior ; and therefore it was as useless to stay away to get rid of it, as for the farmer to refuse to plant an outside row to avoid having one. By-the-way, you seem to think I meant you—if not exclusively, at least principally. This is not the fact. I began the communication as a private letter to the principal of another institution on this side of the Hudson, and finally concluded to give it a public and general character : I therefore meant you *inclusively* with others. I find my sheet is full, and I must close. Love to all friends.

"Yours in affection and esteem,

"W. FISK.

"Send us on as many as you can next Commencement. We want our outside row well planted ; and we can insert some in the centre, if they are *big enough*. They will droop a little at first when transplanted so large, but we will water them as well as we can, and try to make them live."

As we have had occasion to allude to Dr. Fisk's sentiments on theological education, we insert a letter addressed to Mr. Henry Bannister, a graduate of the Wesleyan University, who wrote to him for advice in regard to the course he should pursue.

"Middletown, August 30, 1837.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Absence at first, and, since my return, our Commencement, have prevented an earlier answer to your esteemed favour of a late date.

"With respect to the principal topic of your letter, I would say that I heartily approve of most of the suggestions and sentiments therein advanced. I would not say that we ought to expect every one who enters the ministry to go through college even, much less through a theological seminary. But, other things being equal, the more learning the better ; and, as you well observed, the time is at hand (*yea, now is*), when the Methodist Church demands the best talent and the best culture to fill many of her important posts.

"I should not think it advisable, however, for you to go through a three years' course at one of the theological seminaries. Many things are taught in those courses which a Methodist preacher could better learn elsewhere. The following is, as it strikes me, a better plan : In the New-York University is one of the best Oriental scholars probably there is in the country. There you can study Hebrew and Biblical Criticism, and the laws of Interpretation. Perhaps one year will be all you will want for this purpose ; pastoral duties can be best learned on the *circuit* : and during the two years' probation, a young man may qualify himself in all that is peculiar to Methodism, and in many points of dogmatical theology.

"I am glad to discover that your mind is deeply, and, as I trust, profitably exercised on the great subject of the Christian ministry. May the Great Head of the Church lead you into the path of duty, and fit you for it.

"Most affectionately yours,
"W. FISK."

To Mrs. M. K., of Brattleborough.

"Middletown, October, 28, 1837.

"MY DEAR COUSIN,

"I have often determined to write *soon* since I returned,* but find there is no other way than to write *now*, if I mean to write at all. But I cannot write much *if I write now*. It is Saturday evening, and to-morrow I go to a neighbouring town to preach to a people that have recently been visited with a gracious shower of mercy. This, by-the-way, is what may be said of many towns of late. For years I have not heard of such extensive revivals as are now reported to us in the news of every week. It seems the commercial embarrassments of the country are doing the people good, and they are beginning to think that something besides money-making deserves the attention of immortal minds."

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"I trust, my dear cousin, your faith has increased since last I saw you, and that you are trusting in our common Saviour with a Christian's confidence. The privilege of trusting in Christ is a blessed one, which the most unworthy have the most need of, and the most encouragement to enjoy. The *weary* and *heavy laden*, the *sick, hungry, thirsty, mourning, sinful*, yea, the *chief of sinners*, all, all are invited to trust in Christ. Which of these are you? Do you say all? Then have you all that ever a poor sinner had to recommend you to the compassion of our merciful High-priest."

This year (1837) is mournfully memorable to many by the destruction of the steam-packet *Home*, in which so many human beings found a watery grave. In this ill-starred vessel was a graduate of the Wesleyan University, a young man of

* That is, from a journey to Lyndon, in the course of which he stopped at Brattleborough.

fine talents, amiable disposition, and exemplary morals. He had been seven years under Dr. Fisk's care, and had gone, at his recommendation, to the South to take charge of a school. We allude to Mr. Aaron C., son of the Reverend Heman Bangs, one of the earliest and warmest supporters of the Wesleyan University. The annexed letter of condolence was written to his mother on the occasion, while his father was gone down to the coast to endeavour to regain the corpse of their child.

"Middletown, October 19, 1837.

"MY DEAR SISTER,

"When I first heard of the probable loss of your beloved son, I thought of writing to you, but the hope that possibly, after all, he might have been saved, led me to forbear. The intelligence of this morning, however, having almost, if not entirely, annihilated that hope, I cannot longer forbear dropping a few words, which, if they have no other effect, may contribute a little to the assuaging of your bitter sorrow, by showing you that your friends do not leave you to suffer alone. Into a mother's grief, mourning for the loss of her firstborn son, I know I cannot fully enter. But I can form some idea of a mother's love, and, of course, of a bereaved mother's loss.

"It will be hardly any diminution of your sorrow to speak of the excellences of your son, and yet it may be some mitigation. If it does not lessen the amount, it may assuage the bitterness of your grief to reflect that he was a dutiful and affectionate son; that he was an amiable and a promising youth; beloved by all who knew him; and yet you say, 'from such a son I must be parted!' Ay! but, I trust, not forever. God, in his providence, has willed that he should go first; but then you must follow: and say not that you have travailed at his birth, and laboured and watched over him during his childhood and youth in vain; for, to say nothing of the mother's joy, that has been mingled all the way with a mother's love and anxiety, is it nothing that you have been instrumental of introducing into an endless existence an intelligent being? Have you not hope in his death,

and is it no consolation that you have assisted in swelling the songs of Heaven? Where could the fondest mother more desire to see her much-loved son, than ranked with the heavenly choirs, joining in the songs of the redeemed? Who would not feel a mother's pain and solicitude for the honoured privilege of being instrumental in peopling Heaven? and then you have, in addition, this most efficacious lesson to lead your affections from earth to Heaven. Here you may show your faith and patience in the dispensations of your heavenly Father. Shall we receive good at the hand of the Lord, and not evil? 'As many as I love,' says God, 'I rebuke and chasten.' God is trying you now, to see whether your confidence in him is so genuine and sincere, that you are willing to trust in him for enjoyments in *his own way*, or whether you must sink under the weight of disappointments, because he has crossed your fondest wishes. But you say, perhaps, 'My heart is bruised, my wound is incurable.' God can and will bind up and sooth that bruised heart.

'Ask but his grace, and, lo! 'tis given.'

"My affectionate remembrance to the sisters and brother. Tell them, now that Aaron is gone, they must love and honour their parents the more—must the more carefully cherish their affection for each other, and, above all, the more carefully prepare to follow their departed brother.

"Mrs. Fisk joins in sympathetic remembrance. Our prayers are for you. When the bereaved father returns, assure him of my sympathies and prayers.

"Yours in Christian and friendly sympathy,

"W. FISK."

Our duty now requires us to record an incident which our feelings incline us to suppress; but it has already been placed before the public in a form calculated to do Dr. Fisk an injury, and that by the only person who can have any cause of complaint against this passage. Returning from New-York early in December, Dr. Fisk met on board the steamboat with the Hon. James G. Birney, well known as an active agent in the abolition cause. In his company were

several gentlemen of his own sentiments. By some means, they led Dr. Fisk into a discussion of their respective theories. It attracted considerable attention, and excited no small interest among the passengers. Dr. Fisk stood alone, while several were opposed to him, who prompted and aided each other. Yet he maintained his ground with, at least, equal advantage, according to the testimony of a gentleman who was present, and with perfect dignity and self-command. A few days after, he was quite surprised to receive from Mr. Birney a letter, requesting him to correct a partial and garbled copy of the discussion, stating that it was the writer's intention to publish it. Here is Dr. Fisk's answer :

"Hon. James G. Birney.

"DEAR SIR,

"I was not a little surprised at the reception of your note of the fourth instant, announcing your purpose to publish a sketch of the discussion we held on Saturday last, on board the steamboat, while on our way from New-York to New-Haven.

"To this I have many objections. Among others, before I choose to have my sentiments spread before the public, I prefer to do it myself, in my own words, and in my own way. In these times of public calumny and misrepresentation, I would not have a familiar friend to publish my sentiments for me, much less an interested opponent.

"I object, also, to the 'sketch' given in your letter, as *one-sided, deficient, and unfair*. I do not accuse you of designing to misrepresent the conversation ; I only state the fact, as a reason for objecting to your proposed course. If you should publish the sketch as you have given it in your letter to me, one of two things must follow : I must be silent, and thus suffer the public to be deceived, or I must enter into a public controversy with you. For the latter alternative I have neither time nor inclination. The public, sir, do not pay me a salary to spend my time in writing upon this subject. I am engaged in other and important duties ; and, if I appear before the public, I must choose my own time and manner of doing it, so as not to interfere with other paramount engagements.

"It is in accordance with the practice of many abolitionists, I know, to draw others before the public when and as they will, without reference to the proprieties and courtesies of life. That you, sir, are of this character, I have yet to learn. If, however, you attempt it with me in this case, and in the manner proposed, you will have learned beforehand that I consider it *unfair, ungentlemanly, and unchristian*. Most respectfully yours,

W. FISK."

Nevertheless, the paper was published by Mr. Birney, together with the correspondence relating to it. No honourable and impartial mind can approve of this conduct. The discussion was of Mr. Birney's own seeking, and on his own selected, professional topic: with Dr. Fisk it was but a secondary or tertiary subject. While the one was aided by coadjutors, the other stood alone in the contest. Mr. Birney had the subject afterward in his own hands, wrote the account to suit himself, and had the advantage of his own afterthoughts. Of these, by his own acknowledgment, he had availed himself, while he claimed only *substantial* accuracy on the *one* point which he selected out of the many discussed. A slight variation, in such a case, might make great difference. These things prove Dr. Fisk's assertion, that it was "*one-sided, deficient, and unfair*." But, letting this alone, he must have a very obtuse sense of propriety who will justify a publication under such circumstances. Let it be once understood that you are always liable, in stage or steamboat, to be drawn into controversy by any one who meets you, and that he is at perfect liberty to publish the conversation to the world, maugre all your prohibitions, and every man must travel with a gag in his mouth. It will break up all the little urbanity and freedom of intercourse that now exists in the travelling community.

One expression in Dr. Fisk's answer might as well have been omitted; that, I mean, in which he alludes to the Abolitionists as a body; but this by no means justified the severity of Mr. B.'s reply. He seems to have felt that he had the worst side of the case, and he endeavoured to make up in ardour what he wanted in reason.

In connexion with this, for the sake of unity, we introduce another incident connected with the same gentleman. In the following May (1838), Dr. Fisk delivered an address at the meeting of the Colonization Society in New-York. He stated that a certain coloured man had become dissatisfied with the Abolitionists, had gone over to the Colonizationists, and was, in fact, determined on emigrating to Liberia. Mr. Birney addressed a note to Dr. Fisk at the Book Room, demanding the name of this coloured man. Meantime, the doctor had left the city, and did not receive the note until some weeks afterward, when he was in Boston attending the New-England Conference. It was brought to him by some one directly from the Book Room—Dr. Bangs, I think. After Mr. Birney's former conduct, Dr. Fisk desired no farther correspondence with him, and therefore immediately returned the letter through the postoffice unanswered. The writer then spread his own version of the affair before the public, with an asperity unwarranted by the facts. He charged him not only with "littleness," want of "generosity," "justice," and "magnanimity," but also with "inexperience" and "simplicity," and gives the public to understand that, "whatever credit his (Dr. Fisk's) *bare word* may have with particular friends and admirers," that he (Mr. B.) would not believe him "without the proof."

Against Mr. Birney we have nothing farther to say. He enjoys the reputation of an honourable character as well as of distinguished abilities. If this be truly deserved, as I have no reason to doubt other than what is implied in the above transactions, he furnishes only an additional evidence of the distorting influence of party spirit, which has so frequently turned wisdom and goodness from their proper course. Neither do we wish to implicate those with whom Mr. Birney is associated. Every individual must be held responsible for his own conduct, for which his partisans are accountable only so far as they participate in, or justify it.

Immediately on his return from Europe, Dr. Fisk set about writing his *Travels*. It was, in his state of health and with his engagements, a serious undertaking. But the public demanded the work, and, moreover, he was anxious to

do something towards defraying the expenses of his tour.* Through numberless interruptions he pursued his labours, and early in the year 1838 it was presented to the public. To prepare for the press a volume of seven hundred pages, in twelve months or less, was ample work for a man of leisure; but for a person in Dr. Fisk's state of health, with his innumerable and diversified occupations, it was astonishing. His friends feared that he was not doing himself justice; others feared that the labour would again prostrate him. Nevertheless, the volume was completed, and its success surpassed the expectations of the most sanguine. It speedily ran through seven editions, and not less than eight thousand copies have been sold.

Dr. Fisk's pen was seldom unemployed for any length of time. While preparing his *Travels*, he wrote several occasional articles for different periodicals; and, on their completion, he published a series of papers in opposition to the measures that were distracting the Church. The controversy in the Church had now, in a great degree, deviated from the main question of slavery, and turned upon points of ecclesiastical jurisprudence, such as the power of the bishops and presiding elders, the relation of the subordinate Conferences to each other and to the General Conference, and various other kindred topics. It was, in fact, an extension, in a somewhat modified aspect, of the old radical controversy into New-England, where it had not before been debated. Dr. Fisk had long foreseen this result. In a letter to the Rev. Dr. Few in 1837, after conceding to the abolitionists purity of intention, and showing how high-wrought emotion had misled them, he proceeds, "Their object, then, is this, either to bring the great whole of the Church into their views and measures, or to divide the Church."† For

* Dr. Fisk made the offer of his expenses to the trustees, which they generously declined. He then proposed that, if they would build a house for the president, he would contribute the avails of his *Travels* towards it, to go without interest so long as it should be occupied by himself, and to pay six per cent. interest to him or his heirs in case of his removal or death. This proposal was accepted, and the house was built. About two thousand seven hundred dollars were contributed from the profits of the *Travels*.

† Only the more violent are here intended; and the division of the Church was to be only a last resort to accomplish the end.

this purpose, the officers, institutions, and government of the Church were denounced by some of the more indiscreet without mercy, and held up to public odium. Dr. Fisk did not believe this to be the best way to accomplish any moral or religious purpose. He also foresaw that the course things were taking would carry this question to the polls, so that, instead of being debated on grounds strictly moral and religious, it would become a question of party politics; and, if it should come under the influence of political chicanery and intrigue, and in this temper become the dominant influence of the North, it must inevitably lead to a dismemberment of the great Confederation, and probably strike the deathblow to national liberty as well as to the hope of emancipation to the slaves. This course of things had already commenced. In a letter to the Rev. Daniel Fillmore, dated Oct. 17th, 1838, he says, "They are now driving it into politics—*political action*, they say, is the only thing. Alas! how frail is human nature! When I forewarned them, at the very outset of this business, that it would run into party politics, they almost thought I slandered them. It was a great *moral question*, they said; and, as such, was proper business for ministers and Christians: and now this great moral question is to be decided by, as the Emancipator tells us, 'looking well to the ballot-boxes;' not by looking to see whether the candidate for office be a sound, upright man, but whether he will answer certain specific questions to meet their views." The result thus justified Dr. Fisk's prescience. His prediction had already come to pass. Taking all the aspects of the affair, morally, ecclesiastically, politically, not omitting its ulterior bearings upon slavery itself, he considered its *prognosis* every way alarming. He thought it an awful crisis. To him, the unity alike of the Church and the nation, the perpetuity of our institutions, and, possibly, our national existence, seemed to be trembling upon the breath of the populace. Another step, and he knew not but the golden chain that binds together the Church and the States would be broken. He seemed to himself to be standing under the arch of a splendid temple, raised with infinite cost, and skill, and sacrifice, while its foundations and pillars were

giving way, and threatening to bury him and multitudes beneath its ruins. The danger was the greater, because the violence of the North provoked equal violence at the South ; and when two such antagonistic spirits were aroused, there was no knowing what the result might be. Hence, writing again to Dr. Few, and exhorting the South to quietness and forbearance, thus pouring oil upon the yesty waves of strife, he says, " But if the South should become alienated, what would become of us, who have thrown ourselves in the way of these modern reformers ? Let them get the power, and we shall be sacrificed." It may be that, by dwelling long upon the subject, his mind had taken too dark a view of the prospect ; yet, as he had seen his predictions become history in other cases, it might also have become so in this, had not a better spirit come over the land.

Under these impressions, Dr. Fisk wrote his various articles upon this mooted question. His papers on Conference Rights, addressed to the Rev. Dr. Luckey, and published in the *Christian Advocate and Journal*, and his appeal " To the Members and Ministers of the Northern and Eastern Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church," together with sundry fugitive and occasional articles, were written about this time. For these papers he received a very abundant share both of praise and blame, publicly and privately, not omitting some anonymous lucubrations, half moonshine and half mist.

In these discussions we are under no obligation to say that Dr. Fisk never exhibited any undue warmth of feeling. His feelings certainly were strongly excited in view of the interests pending, and he often wrote with great urgency. But, had he evinced much greater warmth than he did, it would not have been surprising, considering how he was assailed. A certain London editor, who replied to Dr. Fisk's account of the slavery question in England, employed language, tried by what code you please, highly reprehensible. To speak of any respectable man as a " busy blockhead," giving a " plausible misrepresentation," and adding, " the lie (short words are sometimes most convenient) passes current at least four months before it can be contradicted," really

places its author so low in the scale of society that he is beneath notice. Yet this language was the very pink of courtesy compared with what came from a renowned personage in Boston. To repeat it after the other would be stepping from St. James's to Billingsgate. One passage alone is enough: "May God convert your proud and stony heart, Willbur Fisk!" Such a specimen of apostrophizing as runs through that article is quite unique. "Well," said Dr. Fisk, with one of his pleasant smiles, after reading it, "that goes a little beyond anything I have seen before." Such was habitually his calm and unruffled temper.

In this state of things, Dr. Fisk attended the New-England Conference, held this summer in Boston. It was a trying scene to him, and very laborious. Besides the business of the Conference, in which he always participated largely, and which was this year unusually onerous, he had personal demands upon him to meet. A junior member of the body, the editor of *Zion's Watchman*, presented against him a charge of defamation, and it was for some time doubtful which way the case would be decided. Fortunately, however, by sending to New-York, two most respectable and competent witnesses were produced, who completely neutralized the accusation. The triumph was complete; and the accuser voluntarily and unconditionally withdrew the charge. At this Conference was also passed the healing measure known as the "Pacification Bill." It originated with the Rev. Gershom F. Cox, who did himself great honour by his services on the occasion. After being freely and fully canvassed by the leaders of the respective parties, Dr. Fisk taking his full share of the labour, it was adopted by almost the entire Conference, who pledged themselves to abide by its provisions. The reader may find the whole document in vol. xii., No. 48, of the *Christian Advocate and Journal*.

The anxiety and labours of this Conference wrought very serious effects upon our subject's health. He was very much prostrated. "On his return home," says Mrs. Fisk, "he was more feeble than I had ever seen him, except when confined to bed." This led to a touching incident in conjugal

life, worthy the effort of a painter. Mrs. Fisk expressed her fears that his late exertions would lay the foundation of some fatal malady. His answer was, "I hope not; after resting, I shall be better. I have, to be sure, been called to make great exertions in behalf of the Church. I have done it conscientiously, and from a sense of duty. And," added he, raising his eyes full in my face, with an expression I had never seen upon his countenance before, "my dear wife, if my exertions could only be the means of uniting the Church, I am willing my life should be the sacrifice. Is it too much to ask of you?" This was a trying appeal. Bursting into tears, she could only reply, "I cannot feel as you do."

Whatever opinion may be formed of Dr. Fisk's exertions in this conflict of minds—and different parties will think differently—one thing, at least, is certain; the Church has come pretty much on to his ground. The file-leaders in the adverse movement have lost their hold upon the public mind. The Eastern Conferences have reverted back to the old and long-tried principles of Church polity and government. In the "seething and boiling of the caldron, the scum," what little there was, "has floated off;" but the residuum is sterling. The last session of the New-England Conference especially, where there had been great contention, was extremely pleasant and soundly Methodistical. We could not but think that, had the spirit of our subject, ere it departed, caught a glimpse of this distant prospect, it would have shed the radiance of delight upon his closing hours. He left us just at the darkest period. Had he survived a few years, he would have been ranked among the conservators of the Church, and would have stood higher than ever in the estimation of his brethren. The sun never looks more glorious than just after an eclipse, and a virtuous man never commands such high regards as immediately after a season of partial obscurity.

It ought to be remarked, that this was not the only topic or occasion on which our subject manifested his preference for temperate measures. The reader has, no doubt, remarked the same disposition in him respecting the anti-Masonic excitement. With his wonted consistency, he also showed it

on the Temperance Question, which he thought was now running into extravagances that threatened to mar the enterprise. He approved as much as ever of the object of the Temperance movement, namely, to discourage the use of all intoxicating drinks, whether distilled or fermented; but he disliked the ground assumed in regard to the latter class, and especially the discussion on the use of wine at the sacrament. He was for rigidly adhering to truth and reason in our views of things, and to moderation and sobriety in our measures. He believed that, whenever we go beyond these in grasping at immediate effects, the issue will generally be detrimental to the cause it was intended to favour. He hit off this subject at a stroke in one of his piquant and somewhat facetious remarks at the New-York Colonization Society. "We live," said he, "in an age of *ultraism*; and we can scarcely engage in any enterprise, *in spite of the devil*, but he himself will turn charioteer, and ruin, by intemperate zeal, a cause which he cannot resist."

We insert some letters which belong to this period of our history:

To the Rev. Charles P. Bragdon.

"Middletown, January 15, 1838.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your esteemed favour was duly received. In reply to the question whether baptism should be administered by a Methodist preacher (for I understand this to be the purport of your inquiry) to one who denies the divinity of Christ, I should answer it most decidedly in the negative, and for this plain reason: I should not consider that such a person or man possessed the *faith* which, in my opinion, is indispensably prerequisite for the admission of adults to baptism. The requisition to believe in order to baptism is clearly indicated in the New Testament in reference to adults; and Christ is the object of this faith—Christ in his true character. In short, the very foundation of the Christian character, and, of course, of motives for Christian ordinances, is faith in Christ. I could not, therefore, give this ordinance to one who denies Christ in his essential character. I would not,

by this, say no man can be saved who denies the divinity of Christ. This denial may be the result of an error of the head, while the heart may trust in Christ. Against the possible salvation, therefore, of such an individual, I would not contend; but when I undertake to build up a *visible Church*, and fix the grand principles of faith and practice for public example and external influence, I must build nothing but the gold, and silver, and precious stones of Gospel truth, lest not only my own works should suffer loss, but also my own salvation be endangered. Besides, how can I baptize a man in the name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, when I know that he receives the ordinance in the name of Christ in a widely different sense from that in which I use the name when I solemnly repeat it in the ordinance? Either I who administer am an idolater, or he who receives the ordinance is *no Christian*. In either case, it would be utterly inconsistent for him to receive the ordinance at my hand, or for me to administer it.

“Yours in Christian bonds,

W. FISK.”

The following two letters were written to a graduate of the Wesleyan University, whom Dr. Fisk had recommended for the presidency of a college at the South. They will explain, in some degree, the secret of his own success in the government of literary institutions:

“Wesleyan University, March 1, 1838.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,

“Your acceptable favour of the 24th ult. is just received. I am highly gratified that you have concluded to go to —, and have strong confidence that you will succeed. It is well you have made up your mind to try the ministry. If God have called you to this office, it will be an additional qualification also for the head of an institution. Will it not be best for you to take a license with you? I certainly think it would.

“I have another thought to suggest. You are aware, I presume, that Southern colleges have suffered more from

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the officious interference of the trustees than from any other source. This is especially true of the state institutions. When Mr. F. first wrote to me on the subject, I informed him I thought a man might be obtained who would suit them, provided they would permit him to have a controlling voice in the organization of the faculty and in the internal arrangement of the school. The reply was, that they should certainly be willing to do that, provided they had a man in whom they found they could confide. This is all we could expect.

"Now the perfection of management in a principal or president is to manage with such prudence and judgment as to be able to secure the co-operation of the board in carrying out *his* plans. The truth is, a public institution will never flourish when the president is merely the instrument to carry out the details of the board. The board must be his instrument in carrying out *his plans*. I speak, of course, with respect to the government, the course of study, the organization of the faculty, &c. In money matters, of course, they are the legal organ. But even here the president must keep a good look-out, and assist in all matters of economy and finance as far as he can. In short, the president must be the *head and soul*. A man that cannot govern the faculty, the trustees, and the students, and all without seeming to *aspire to rule*, is hardly qualified for the place. This he will always be able to do, if his plans are wise, and are executed with prudence and moderation. And although your youth, and your Northern birth and education, may prevent you from speaking and acting with so great freedom at first, yet you will have a countervailing advantage in the fact of its being a new institution, and of its coming into existence under your care. I would advise, then, that you get young men for your colleagues, so that you may mould them to your will; that you have few regulations in the form of trustee statutes. Require them, if they are inclined to make laws (except what relates to terms, &c.), to let you experiment a little at first, and find out what you need, and when you think you have gained their confidence, always evade, in the least offensive way possible, any interference of the

board in the government. As far as you can do it without giving offence, I think your faculty should be selected from Northern men.

"Pardon the freedom with which I give counsel. My anxiety that you get the right start is my excuse.

"Yours in affection, W. FISK."

"Wealeyan University, August 14, 1838.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"Your interesting favour was duly received, and would have been answered before, but that the continued pressure of, first, the Conferences, then our examination, after that, sickness, and, finally, our Commencement, and the accompanying and consequent bustle and labour, has hitherto prevented. But all seems now to be settling down into a regular calm. Our classes are organized, and our machinery is oiled, and plays in unison, without derangement or friction. Much to your disappointment, I fear, tutors R. and K. are tending a part of our machinery, which, from their former acquaintance, as well as from their excellent ability, they are enabled to do to good advantage. They are fine young men, and would, I am persuaded, do well almost anywhere. But as it seems all-important to keep the old flag-ship well officered and manned, for the good of the *whole fleet*, we presume you will cheerfully accord to us these subalterns for the present. In this way we shall be able to train and furnish officers for the ***** and ***** and such other gallant crafts as belong to our fleet. Please make your selection out of *all the rest*. I think well of A., and I also think very well of C., now at Amenia, as also of W. and many others.

"I am glad to hear of your prosperity and prospects. A great door and effectual seems to be opened to you, and I trust there are few or no adversaries. May you have wisdom and grace to aid you. I say *grace*, for in nothing, in my own experience, have I realized the Divine aid more than in directing me in those official duties which I had undertaken for the sake of his cause. Prayer will bring that

assistance ; for inspiration itself has said, ' If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God,' &c.

" The present graduates are mostly provided for, and more of the *first class* are wanted than we can supply.

" I shall ever be happy to hear from you.

" In much affection, yours truly,

" W. FISK."

To his Parents.

" Wesleyan University, April 8, 1838.

" MY DEAR PARENTS,

" By this time I suppose you are settled in your new home. I should be pleased to look in upon you, and see how you are. I hope your new dwelling is comfortable as to *finish, water, arrangement* of apartments, &c. ; but still I fear that, while you may have gained in some respects, you may have lost in others. There is your orchard, and your plums, and your currants ; there is your sugar orchard, your beautiful grove on the opposite side of the road, all of which will be wanting in your new residence. That was a vile hill we were obliged to climb, and I confess there is some pleasure in the reflection that, when I visit you again, I shall not be obliged to climb it. But then there are associations around the brow of that hill which I shall never find elsewhere : not an eminence on which I have not gambolled in childhood ; not a copse of trees with which I have not some cherished association ; the spring, the brook, the sugar place, the limekiln, the pastures, the meadows, the elm-tree, the balm-of-Gilead, the well with its ' moss-covered bucket,' the barn where I used to feed the cattle and tend the lambs, all crowd upon my mind when I think of your leaving that farm of my childhood. And then the prospect ! There was the slope of the hill at the east, how fresh and verdant in June, how rich and varied in autumn ! To the south the hills are spread out before you as a map ; and still farther on, the White Mountains display their snowy sides and cloud-capped tops. Such was that *observatory of nature* on which my young mind used to expatiate and rhapsodize, and from which I used to gaze upon the mountain

scenery, or watch the careering clouds. If anything of genius or enterprise has characterized my life, I think it is measurably owing to these scenes. But the voice of the stranger is now heard in the cottage of my childhood. Well, be it so! When I visit you I can climb the hill, and hold converse with the genii of the groves, and live over, for a short time, the scenes of by-gone days.

"You are nearer public worship, and more among congenial minds, and that is a sufficient compensation for other sacrifices."

To Mrs. K., of Brattleborough.

"Wesleyan University, April 8, 1838.

"MY DEAR COUSIN M.,

"It is now some weeks since I received your last favour, and which, if I rightly remember, I have not answered. Since that time I have been variously occupied, some of the time at home, and some of the time abroad. I have now but lately returned from Washington City, where I had an opportunity not only to see and hear some of the great ones of the nation, but also to proclaim to them, on the Sabbath, in the Capitol, the sovereignty and grace of God. To this they listened with attention; but, alas! how little hope of abiding fruit in such a field! Pride and ambition, party spirit and political intrigue, occupy the mind, and leave little room for serious thought, much less for repentance and faith. I found in Washington, however, some of the excellent of the earth, and some of the members of Congress are truly devoted to God and his Church." * * * *

"With respect to your own mind, I trust you find it composed and peaceful. It seems to me, notwithstanding the gloomy cast of your letter, that you nevertheless held on to the main pillars of the Christian's support and joy. So long as you can realize the kindness of God, and feel that he does not forsake you, there seems little else needed. What more can you desire? If there is not as much light in your path as you desire, still, if God careth for you, all will be well. What more light do you desire than that God is your

merciful friend ? On him let your faith rest, and all things are yours."

In the summer of 1838, the citizens of Middletown determined to celebrate the anniversary of our nation's independence with more than usual eclat. His excellency the governor and his suite were to be present, with several military companies ; an oration was to be delivered, and a public dinner given. The committee of arrangements invited Dr. Fisk to deliver the oration. At first he declined. Nevertheless, such was the urgency of the committee, and such the difficulty of procuring a substitute, that he reluctantly consented. When he received the last urgent invitation, he was in attendance upon the New-England Conference at Boston, undergoing the labours already described, and the remainder of the intervening time was occupied in preparing for, and attending to, the annual examination of the classes in the University. The examination closed July 3d ; hence it was not until between four and five o'clock of the day before the celebration that Dr. Fisk commenced preparing his oration. " It will," said he, " be a barren concern ; for I do not feel like making any exertion. I shall pity the audience." The notes of this oration are now before me. They occupy two sheets of letter-paper, folded once, and written not at all closely. But it occupied an hour and a half in the delivery. It was an able, philosophic, statesmanlike performance. Instead of that strain of unmingled panegyric usual on such occasions, and now almost worn threadbare, he directed the attention of his auditory, after having properly noticed the advantages of our national independence, to the dangers which threaten, and the means of perpetuating it. He dwelt on the pernicious influence of party spirit, the tendency of local and sectional feelings, and the demoralizing effect of wrong notions of liberty and equality. It was remarkable that, at a time when the public mind was very captious on political subjects, with so much impartiality did he deliver his views, that no one could determine from the discourse itself to which of the two political parties he belonged. Both sides claimed him, each admitting the cor-

rectness and importance of his views. The committee of arrangements, in presenting him a vote of thanks for his services, earnestly solicited a copy of the address for publication. But he could not take time to write it out. He was so feeble that he went from his bed to the meeting, and thence back to the sofa.

CHAPTER XIX.

Commencement-day of 1838.—Faithful Letter.—Traits of Character.—Decline of Health.—Last Visit to New-York.—Watch-night.—Protestant Missions in France.—Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism.—Letters.—Oregon Mission.

On the first day of August was held the last Commencement of the Wesleyan University that Dr. Fisk attended. He was extremely feeble, and on the morning of Commencement-day it was considered doubtful whether he would be able to endure the fatigue incident to the ceremonies. It would have been a sad drawback on the pleasure of the season to have had the president's chair filled by another. Anxious himself, also, to meet the wishes of his friends, as well as to see the performances, he exerted his utmost strength, and went from his bed, on which he had reclined after breakfast, to the procession. He passed through the day better than was feared ; yet there were some eyes that looked upon him in great doubt whether he would take part in another. The event unhappily justified their melancholy forebodings. In the evening, as usual, he entertained the strangers at his own house, when more than eighty attended.

The following is Dr. Fisk's account of this anniversary. It contains, also, an exhibition of the state and prospects of the institution at that period. It was published in *Zion's Herald* :

“ THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY.

“ MR. EDITOR,

“ Before I saw the notice of our Commencement in the *Herald*, copied from the *Advocate*, I had intended to communicate a brief account of our literary anniversary, and, in connexion, make some other remarks relating to the institution, which seemed to me at this time particularly appropriate. The account already published, however, will preclude the necessity of any farther notice of the Commencement exercises. I will add my testimony, however, to what has

already been published, to the superior merit of the oration before the literary societies, by A. H. Everett, Esq., on the literature of the Bible. It was an intellectual feast, and rendered the more interesting to me by the pleasing thought that scores of young men, who are destined to act a public part in life, were imbibing sentiments in favour of the holy oracles which could not fail deeply to interest them in these fountains of truth. Professor Allen's oration before the Cuvierian Society was highly spoken of, although I had not the pleasure of hearing it. These public occasions, in connexion with our literary institutions, accomplish much for the cause of education. They give a popular character and a general interest to the subject, and invest our seminaries of learning with a public sympathy which never could be secured by the mere exercises of the cloister.

" We have examined and received more than sixty new students for the present collegiate year, and our whole number on our next catalogue will be about one hundred and fifty-two. Thus, it will be seen, we are still on the advance as to numbers, having had a regular nett gain of from ten to twenty every year since we opened the college in 1831. I trust, too, we are advancing in all other respects, so far as our internal arrangements and advantages are concerned. We greatly need, however, increased accommodations, both for public rooms and rooms for students. We have room for one hundred and twenty-three in the college buildings, and have hired a small house in which we room thirteen more ; making provision, in the whole, for one hundred and thirty-six. The remainder have, with difficulty, found rooms in the neighbourhood. The question is soon to be decided, it seems, whether our friends will furnish the means of enlargement according to the probable advance of the University, or whether our indifference and parsimony shall stint the growth and blast the prospects of this rising seminary. I beg our friends to give this subject a thought, and inquire what is duty in this matter. Next year a plan will be presented to them, according to the decision of the annual Conference at its last session, which will enable them, if they will, to do us great service in our pecuniary concerns.

G g g

"The New-England Conference, to her praise be it spoken, has been the first, I think, to lead the way in forming education societies in our Church. On this subject I beg the privilege of saying a few words to our brethren. The greater portion, probably, of those who are going through the University, are young men of straitened circumstances ; many of them are getting an education in view of the ministry ; but, to get through, they are obliged to involve themselves in debt, and hence, after they graduate, they are compelled to enlist in the work of teaching to discharge those debts. For this purpose they emigrate to the West and South ; and perhaps it oftener than otherwise happens that they settle down in this or some other secular calling, and the itinerant work is deprived of their needed services ; whereas, if they were prepared to go into the field immediately, they would greatly strengthen the ministerial work. This many would do if the Church should assist them in their education. Two of the beneficiaries of the New-England Education Society graduated this year, and with warm and willing hearts *they are already in the field*, and are the only ones out of a class of twenty-six, with one other exception, who are likely for the present, if at all, to join the travelling ranks ; not because there were not several others who were licensed preachers, but they were in debt, and must earn money to discharge their obligations. I know it is well to raise up teachers. Christian educators of youth are greatly needed, and may do a vast amount of good ; but we want at least a good proportion to enter the travelling connexion.

"In addition, it ought now to be known, that the board have found it necessary to curtail their credits. Heretofore we have credited any student his board and term bills who could give bonds for their payment in a reasonable time after he should graduate ; but this has drawn so heavily upon our limited funds, that it has been determined we can at present give no man credit for board ; for the term bills we still give credit, on good security. This curtailment of credit urges an additional argument in favour of the Education Society.

"What a favour would some wealthy man confer on the Church and the country, if he would give now, or bequeath at his death, the sum of ten thousand dollars as a loan fund, to be devoted to the education of indigent young men, who would give bonds to refund the money advanced, with interest, in two or three years after they graduate. It would be a perpetual charity. The interest would probably more than cover any losses that might occur, and fifty young men might in this way be kept continually at college. I know of no way by which a greater amount of good could be accomplished by the same amount of means.

"Before closing, I will drop one word respecting the comparative expense of our University. Some young men, I understand, have declined coming here, because they think our expenses are higher than at some other colleges. Now I am satisfied that this is only true of a few of our interior colleges; and with these, taking everything into the account, the difference is very small; and, as an offset against this, indigent young men who graduate with us have the almost certain prospect of getting employment immediately after they graduate. I have such a correspondence on this subject with all parts of the country, that all our graduates find profitable employment.

"In conclusion, I would add, to the praise of God and the encouragement of the Church, that we have in the University at this time a good state of religious feeling, and I especially request the Church to remember in their prayers their University, that converting and sanctifying grace may rest upon these young men.

W. FISK.

"Wesleyan University, Sept. 12th, 1838."

"*Copy of a letter, dated August 9th, 1838, and sent to —, a graduate of the Wesleyan University, whom, but a few days before, I had seen rising from a drunkard's bed (the ground), where for several hours he had lain insensible.*

"MY DEAR —,

"Your note was duly received, and its contents were very gratifying.

"You cannot well conceive of the distress I felt at seeing

one of the sons of the Wesleyan University rising up from his bestial bed, and brushing the mud and dirt from his clothes. I asked, Have I been the cause of this, either by neglect or otherwise? Is it possible we are toiling here to educate young men for victims of intemperance? *Ruined! RUINED!!* thought I, forever! And then I thought of the feelings of the *father*, after all his labour for his son. Ay! and I thought of an educated mind becoming first a *brute*, and then a *fiend*! The soul! O! the undying soul!! tormented with a drunkard's thirst here, and with the *unmitigated thirst of a Dives* hereafter!! O! you are hanging upon the verge of a bottomless abyss—and *fiery billows roll below*! Flee! flee!! not merely to the strength of your firm resolutions, but to God: give soul and body to him, and *he will take care of you. Trust nothing else.*

"I said your letter was very gratifying. There was, however, one feature in it which led me to fear still, and that was an attempt to palliate your case by calling it an accident and the 'first time.' I do not mean by this to question your veracity; but long observation has taught me that, when a man begins to descend the rapids of intemperance, he does not fully understand his own danger. To drink morning bitters! to have a breath *tainted* with alcohol! and, finally, to become entirely intoxicated—in the morning, too! O, my dear sir, your danger is *great, very great.*

"I should have written to you before I saw yours, but I supposed you would call to get your diploma, and then I could converse with you. I now write in *grief*, but in *love* and in *HOPE.*

"O, may God bless you and *save* you; so prays, and so will ever pray, while there is hope, one who feels for you as a *father*, and who is happy in being able still to subscribe himself your affectionate friend,
W. FISK."

It is but just to add that, as this seemed the first offence of the kind in the young man, so it was the only one. He wrote an answer to Dr. Fisk's expostulation full of penitence and promises, which, we believe, have been effectual.

Soon after Commencement, he went with Mrs. Fisk to the seashore to enjoy a change of air and relaxation. But he

had only been there three days when he was recalled by an invitation to preach a sermon in behalf of a benevolent society.

A few observations, still farther illustrative of certain features in our subject's character, will not, we trust, be inappropriate.

The reader will rightly judge that Dr. Fisk was a remarkably humble man; but his humility did not assume any equivocal shapes, or appear under any of those guises which self-love often uses to solicit observation. He was attentive to all the proprieties and decencies of life. He affected no needless singularities. He never thought of *showing* his humility. It appeared in his manner of receiving praise, or censure, or opposition; in the absence of all self-seeking, and the insidious modifications of pride—envy, anger, contempt. Though we have seen him in very various circumstances, we never heard from him, for any human being, that sure indication of an inflated superiority, an expression of contempt. This is no ordinary commendation. A certain writer has well said, "The language of contempt is not to be found in the vocabulary of a Christian;" and the same philosophic poet whose words we have before employed, observes, in one of his sonnets,

"Know that pride,
Howe'er disguised in its own majesty,
Is littleness; that he who feels contempt
For any living thing, hath faculties
Which he has never used; that thought with him
Is in its infancy. The man whose eye
Is ever on himself, doth look on one,
The least of Nature's works; one who might move
The wise man to that scorn which wisdom holds
Unlawful ever."—WORDSWORTH.

From this vice he was preserved by the equal development of all his faculties, and by that deep spirit of Christianity which presented all objects in their proper relations to each other and to the Infinite Being above us.

It has sometimes been the wonder of persons at a distance, that at home Dr. Fisk was always spoken of in terms of respect and affection that seemed to border on idolatry. Perhaps we have solved the enigma. It was owing to the over-

flowing affection of his heart, governed in its utterance and mode of expression by his superior mental endowments. His own mind was always "kept in a just equipoise of love," and thus,

"Rich in love
And sweet humanity, he was himself,
To the degree that he desired, beloved."

He used no other witchery; but this alone secured the spontaneous homage of the hearts around him.

The reader has no doubt seen, from the course of our history, that Dr. Fisk's mind was singularly fertile in tender sentiment. His thoughts moved with great alacrity within the region of the sensibilities. This appeared both in his public speaking and his social intercourse. Of the latter, the following illustration may be given: Some time the preceding autumn, a kind and respected neighbour was in great affliction from successive bereavements. As Dr. and Mrs. Fisk, after the funeral, sat in the room with their beloved friend, the latter said to her husband, "Can you not speak a few words to comfort Mr. W.?" He replied, with his own expressive manner, "His grief is too deep to be reached by human words. When you and I, dear R., are parted, it will not be the lopping off of a branch: it will be severing the tree through its trunk, and leaving all the delicate fibres exposed, out of which will ooze the very heart's blood. Here the branches are lopped and the trunk is severed. But is it not well that the sturdiest part remains, and that the most tender have found rest in the bosom of their God, who alone can bind up the wounded? And he will do it."

We have already had occasion to notice Dr. Fisk's gentleness of spirit in giving reproof. One feature in this part of his character was particularly worthy of imitation, namely, that after a reproof he always evinced more kindness towards the offending party than before. This was the case in his household as well as elsewhere, of which Mrs. Fisk has given a pleasing illustration. "He was," she observes, "a faithful pastor in his own family. When, at any time, I had erred, he would convince me of it, and manifest so much tenderness for me, that I would sometimes say to him, 'I think you love an erring being better than a perfect one.'

‘Not the error,’ he would reply, ‘but the grace that convinced you of the error.’ ”

In the course of this autumn (1838), Dr. Fisk wrote an appeal to the citizens of Connecticut in behalf of the Wesleyan University. This had no small influence in procuring from the Legislature, at its next session, an appropriation of ten thousand dollars. But it is only justice to say that we are also greatly indebted for this enactment to the exertions of Dr. Charles Woodward, of this city, who was that year a member of the Assembly.

Dr. Fisk continued to be the admiration and delight of all his associates and friends. We scarcely heard a whisper to his disadvantage; or if any trivial act appeared doubtful, almost all would blame themselves rather than him. All were sensible of his superiority: he alone seemed unconscious of it. His simplicity was delightful. Perfectly natural and unaffected, he always seemed to act correctly, and appeared equally in his place in every situation. Hence, also, he would do with dignity and grace what inferior men would hardly venture upon. He would interest himself in the smallest affairs, where he saw that he could impart comfort or gratification. We have seen him stop his horse in the street for the sake of placing before him a little boy, whose eyes told how he longed for a ride. He very often put himself to great inconvenience to meet the wishes or wants of the domestic circle, frequently performing those little offices in which the intention dignifies the act, and the spirit of kindness lends it a moral beauty.

His piety was deep, and vigorous, and uniform. It was not assuming, officious, or cynical; but natural, mild, and cheerful. Perhaps it was not as diffusive or efficient in the social circle as we have seen in some men of more forwardness and less discretion, but it was not the less apparent and impressive. His conversation and sentiments were all tinged with religious truth and Christian principles. His piety was deeply imbedded in his soul, and from it went out an atmosphere that more or less impregnated all who came within its influence.

The following simple stanzas are an indication of his ha-

bitual regard of the Divine Being. He carried them for at least twenty years in his pocket-book. As they possess no great poetic merit, it must have been for the sentiment alone that he valued them.

"OUR FATHER WHO ART IN HEAVEN. .

"ART thou my Father! Then no more
 My sins shall tempt me to despair;
 My Father pities and forgives,
 And hears a child's repentant prayer.
 Art thou my Father! Let me strive
 With all my powers to learn thy will:
 To make thy service all my care,
 And all thy wise commands fulfil.
 Art thou my Father! Teach my heart
 Compassion for another's wo,
 And ever to each child of thine
 A brother's tenderness to show.
 Art thou my Father! Then I know,
 When pain, or want, or griefs oppress,
 They come but from a Father's hand,
 Which wounds to heal, afflicts to bless.
 Art thou my Father! Then in doubt
 And darkness, when I grope my way,
 Thy light shall shine upon my path,
 And make my darkness like the day.
 Art thou my Father! Then no more
 Tremble my soul at Death's alarms;
 He comes, a messenger of love,
 To bear me to a Father's arms."

Because it bears somewhat upon our present topic, I introduce here an extract from a letter to the Rev. D. W. Clark, principal of the Amenia Wesleyan Seminary.

"December 20.

* * * * *

"I have long felt that our graduates were not doing all they ought to do for the ministry. They are, many of them, filling stations of usefulness and honour, but too few give themselves up entirely to the ministerial work. And yet what is more important than the *Christian ministry*? Permit me, in this connexion, to suggest one thought to you; the thought is this: If nothing in the providence of God

should foreclose it, may it not be your duty, before many years, say after you have continued in your present situation long enough to free yourself from pecuniary embarrassment, to join Conference? In the character of a minister of Christ, you may do much for the cause of God; and if, after a few years, you should be called into some higher Methodist seminary, or to take some important missionary superintendence, you will have had just such a training as would best qualify you for the place. This is only a suggestion for you to think of. I might enlarge upon it, but I forbear.

"We are in usual prosperity. My own health is poor. My regards to your lady, although I have not the pleasure of an acquaintance, and also to your assistant teachers. With sincere desire for your usefulness in whatever station you may be called to act in the Church of God,

"Affectionately yours,

W. FISK."

Dr. Fisk, while in Europe, after his attack at Pisa, was troubled with a "peculiar numbness and dull sensation of pain" in his lower extremities, "which," he observes, "was not a little embarrassing in my subsequent sight-seeing." During the present year (1838), this affection returned with greater violence, and was attended with swelling and stiffness of the knee. Yet the cause not being fully understood, he did not think it portended anything fatal. He continued the most of his engagements, was always cheerful and ready to perform his various duties. As winter drew near, and the stiffness and pain increased, he confined himself for some time to the house, called a medical consultation, and used some local applications. But he could not be entirely idle. His pen was often used; his mind was much occupied in studying the present aspects of intellectual science in Europe. He even meditated the preparation of a work on Mental and Moral Philosophy, and another on the Philosophy of Theology, and, indeed, went so far as to sketch a plan of these works, which filled several sheets of paper. When it was suggested to him that the study of metaphysics might cool the fervour of his preaching, he replied, "Perhaps, then, it is all right that I have not time; for the heart needs reform-

ing as much as the head needs instructing, and they ought not to be separated."

Tired at length of confinement, he again ventured into the pulpit, and preached two or three touching sermons in his chair. He also went to New-York, by request of the Missionary Board, on business relating to the Oregon Mission. While in the city, he attended the missionary meeting at Greene-street, at which the Rev. Messrs. John Seys, William Stocker, and George Brown, with Messrs. Jabez A. Burton, recently deceased, Walter P. Jayne, and J. P. Barker, took their farewell of their friends previously to their departure for Liberia. Though not expecting to speak, yet being called on, Dr. Fisk arose, and delivered one of his most splendid and stirring appeals. For vivacity and power, it equalled, if it did not exceed, any former effort. It completely thrilled his audience, and drew tears, says an eyewitness, from "eyes unused to weep." He was then so feeble that he had to sustain himself with his cane, to which he alluded very affectingly in the course of his address.

On the last night of the year, Dr. Fisk attended the Watch-night in the Methodist Church in Middletown, and preached the first sermon. His text was taken from the address of the patriarch Jacob to Pharaoh: "Few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers, in the days of their pilgrimage." It was touching to see him upon his elevated seat, for he was obliged to preach in a sitting posture, discoursing of life, death, and immortality. Many of his thoughts and illustrations were striking and beautiful. He compared man, in the current of life, to a vessel in a whirlpool, borne round and round by the eddying current, offering feeble resistance, until it reached the vortex and disappeared. There was a remarkable appropriateness in the subject, which would have made it still more affecting had the event which soon followed been foreseen. But, though some feared that it might not be far distant, neither Dr. Fisk nor his friends expected it so soon. Next day he felt sufficiently well to spend the whole of it in making calls in his chaise on such of his friends as his pressure of duties had

made him neglect through the year, saying, "I must exert myself to meet the calls of friendship, or I never shall have time to meet them. My duties only seem to increase with my years."

After this he wrote his letters on Protestant Missions in France. He retained a lively interest for this interesting and mighty nation, and in the month of May, 1837, he moved a resolution in the Board of Managers of the Methodist Missionary Society in New-York, recommending the appointment of an agent to visit some of the principal departments of France, and "convey to evangelical Christians there our friendly salutations, and assure them of our readiness to co-operate with them in striving to promote pure and undefiled religion among them." It is believed that this resolution was presented in view of giving a special commission on the business proposed to Dr. Olin, then just on the point of embarking for the Continent of Europe. Dr. Fisk continued to entertain great hopes of the evangelization of France, and thought that, as American Christians, we are under especial obligations to use every feasible exertion to contribute to that desirable object.

He also wrote various important private letters about this time,* and, at the request of Dr. Luckey, then editor of the Methodist Quarterly Review, he commenced a review of Dr. Bangs's History of the Methodist Episcopal Church; but he had only sketched out a rough plan of the article when he was arrested by his final illness.

Another subject at this time awakened deep interest in his mind: I mean the celebration of the centenary of Wesleyan Methodism. There is a wisely-provided tendency in the human mind to hold periodical commemorations of important events. Witness the Jewish festivals and other celebrations in every age and country. So, also, the ancient Romans celebrated their Ludi Cæculares, or Centennial Games, when the herald went forth inviting the people to come together to see "what no man had seen before, and should never see again."

* Mrs. Fisk informs us that there are on file 725 letters all received and answered since their return from Europe. "Some of the answers," she observes, "covered more than one sheet of paper, while many unimportant letters he destroyed, and I doubt not wrote many which I had not the means of knowing."

Into this project Dr. Fisk entered with characteristic ardour. The origin of the reformation of the eighteenth century, the wonderful man and his coadjutors who were instrumental in it, and the astonishing effects that have followed, without political power or adequate human elements, kindled his imagination and fired his sensibilities. We insert the following from his pen, annexed by Dr. Bangs to his announcement of the project:

"After the above was written," says Dr. Bangs, "I received a communication from Dr. Fisk, in which, after alluding to what our brethren in England had done, he concludes in the following language:

"Let the Conferences and the brethren generally determine that, so far as collections and contributions are concerned, nothing of a local and a mere sectional interest shall be admitted or thought of. It is not a centenary of Georgia or Maine Methodism—of Methodism in the Atlantic or Western States merely—but of METHODISM; anything less, therefore, than a *connexional object*, is beneath the great occasion. Let it be an object in which the *whole Church* has a common interest. It pains me to hear a whisper of anything short of this. I am sure all brethren, whatever may be their territorial position, will, *on reflection*, say, "Give us a *connexional object*; present a case in which we have a common interest." Among our brethren in England, it was an assumed axiom, which became the basis of all their subsequent arrangements, that whatever they did should be "connexional." So it should be with us.

"Another principle which we all ought to adhere to, if we do anything on this subject, is to determine to agree. "It was not enough," says Dr. Bunting, in speaking of their first deliberations about their plan, "to agree to disagree. We felt that it was our bounden duty *to agree to agree*." This also should be our course. It is true, for myself, I can see nothing so important as the purchasing or building of Mission premises in New-York. This is a common object, an important object, and one dear to the breast of every Methodist. It is, moreover, what is specially needed, and its necessity will increase every year. This also will be

monumental. A substantial edifice, plain yet becoming, imposing and yet simple, with suitable apartments for the lodgement of departing or returning missionaries ; with rooms for the necessary offices ; for a missionary museum—library ; for storage of mission goods, and for the residence of the missionary secretary and family. Such an edifice, erected in a convenient and public part of the City of New-York, would be a worthy memorial of the centenary of Methodism. It would present to the world a noble monument of Methodist faith, and zeal, and liberality, and would, at the same time, increase the missionary facilities, and curtail the annual expenditures to an extent not readily conceived of by those who are not personally acquainted with the practical operation of this noble enterprise. You, my dear sir, know too well, by daily experience, the inconveniences of our present accommodations, or, rather, almost entire want of accommodations. How great, then, must these embarrassments be, as the missionary work increases. Give us, then, I would say, as the fruit of our centennial celebration, a mission-house, whose monumental walls shall proclaim to the world, and to our children's children, how highly we prize that Methodism which, under God, has imbodyed in the Church below more than a million of believers, and has doubtless been instrumental in swelling the Church above by more than double that number ; a mission-house which, moreover, shall for centuries to come, perhaps, be the centre of operations for an enterprise that shall aid to send the Gospel all over this wide earth. Such are my views. Nevertheless, if the majority of voices are in favour of some other object, I will not object—nay, I will co-operate ; only, I repeat, let it be “connexional,” and not sectional.

“ ‘ Finally, I would suggest that our periodicals should all take up the subject, write upon it, and stir up the public mind in reference to it ; that our experienced brethren and fathers should especially take the lead in this interesting movement ; and that preparations should everywhere be made to celebrate it in a manner worthy of the occasion and the cause.

“ ‘ Such, reverend and dear sir, are some of my crude

thoughts on this subject. If you think them worthy of being presented to the public, with any additional remarks or any modifications you may judge proper, you are at liberty to publish them. In the mean time, let us all remember that none of us shall live to see another centenary of Methodism; that now, therefore, is our time to move, if we ever do anything on such an occasion. Let us also remember that this will be an appropriate time for reviewing the past; to throw ourselves upon our primitive principles; to gird ourselves for our great work in the coming Methodistical century; to call around the Church the reminiscence of the *past*, with a view to gather motives and strength for the great and sublime enterprise of the *future*. Let the entire Methodist Church at this point *pause, reflect, pray, and act*, and who can tell what an impetus such a general celebration may give to the cause we love, and the cause that has blessed and honoured us! Let us also remember that what is done in this matter must be done quickly. The year 1839 is already commenced, and it will soon run out.

“ ‘Yours in Gospel bonds,

W. FISK.’ ”

We need not relate in this place the results of this project; but we cannot forbear saying, that, had Dr. Fisk lived until the 25th of October, 1839, how would his soul have dilated amid the joyous solemnities of that day! The prayer-meeting at sunrise was peculiarly interesting in its associations. There was much of inspiration in the thought that, as the sun on that day gilded the mountain-tops of each portion of our globe, the voice of devotion went up to Heaven. From England to Nova Scotia and New-Brunswick, through the United States, across the Rocky Mountains to Oregon, over the gemmed Pacific to India, and thence, again, across the Indian Ocean, and up the coast of Africa to Gibraltar, and thence, through France and the isles of Jersey and Guernsey, back again to England; in all these places the voice of praise was heard. Cowper's day had arrived, for

“ Mountain tops

From distant mountains caught the flying joy;
Till, nation after nation taught the strain,
Earth roll'd the rapturous hosanna round.”

But, if Dr. Fisk did not join the scene on earth, no doubt he beheld it with interest from the higher and purer regions where he dwells; for what refreshed the piety and animated the faith of myriads on earth, could not but be interesting to the redeemed in heaven.

We add a few private letters of this period :

To Captain Abraham G. Jennings, Fairfield, Conn.

"Wealeyan University, Jan. 26, 1839.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I learn, by a letter from your brother, the afflicting intelligence of the death of your son and our late pupil. This unexpected event has filled our hearts with sorrow. How much more, then, must it pain you, whose relation to him was so near, and whose loss is so irreparable. My own share in this affliction, although not small, as your son stood in an interesting relation to us, is lost sight of when I think of your grief and that of your family. Fain would I, if possible, mitigate that grief; but what can I say? I cannot make up your loss: God alone can do that. I can, it is true, talk to you of submission; but this you have been taught long since by our holy religion. You know it is God that has done it, and that he does all things right. Here, therefore, you must rest; and while sorrow presses you down, feel that it is the Lord. Oh, my dear sir, hide yourself under the pavilion of his covert until these calamities are overpast. Your son had been with us almost four years. In all this time he has been an obedient and faithful pupil. I have this evening been looking over the College records,* and I find that, from the commencement of his membership in this institution, he has rarely, if ever, been absent from any duty, great or small, without rendering a reasonable excuse. His scholarship was very respectable, and his deportment towards his instructors was always respectful.

* Dr. Fisk had not, for some time, been out in the night air. Nevertheless, on receiving information of the death of young Mr. Jennings, he went over to the College in the evening, to ascertain with accuracy his relative standing in his class, for his father's satisfaction. The same evening he wrote to Mr. Jennings's room-mate a faithful letter on the importance of preparing for eternity, observing, "It must quicken my diligence in striving to be more faithful to those who remain."

"That David was faithful to all the duties of personal piety, I could not say. Like too many students, he undoubtedly suffered his mind to be occupied with present scenes, and with the ambitious prospects of life; but he always appeared to treat Divine worship and serious things not only with respect, but with an attention that indicated thoughtfulness and interest in religious subjects. The latter part of last term he devoted himself assiduously to nursing a sick chum, and another fellow-student who was sick. They have recovered, but he is gone! How mysterious is the providence of God!

"If I can afford you, sir, any aid in settling up any unsettled affairs of your son here, it will afford me pleasure to do it.

"Not knowing whether your son has a mother living, or what may be the other branches of your family, I have only to tender you and all my kind condolence, and commend you to the mourner's friend. I much sympathize in your affliction. I am yours sincerely,
W. FISK."

To his Parents.

"January 29, 1839.

"The winter, on the whole, has been favourable; at least it has been here, and I hope with you. If so, and your house is comfortable, I trust you will get comfortably through the winter; at any rate, I hope your minds are reposing with confidence on an Almighty arm, and that your faith penetrates to that world, where

'Chilling winds and poisonous breath

* * * * *

Are felt and feared no more.'

Much, indeed, have you to comfort you. I would not, it is true, direct your attention to any other support or ground of hope than to Christ, the sinner's friend; for, after all, the best of us are *sinners saved by grace*. But it is some comfort to me, if not to you, that you have for many years 'fought the good fight of faith;' that, like Samuel of old, you can say to the people, 'Whose ox or ass have I taken?' that your house has been the home of the stranger, and the resting-place of the Christian pilgrim; that the humble and the

oppressed, who have come to you for counsel and succour, have not been sent sorrowful away; that your house has been a house of prayer, and that at the domestic altar your children have been taught the principles of that devotion which has been the comfort of their lives. That God whom you have so long served, and taught your family to serve, will not forsake you in your old age. Surely the evening of your life should be joyous, for the day of a joyous eternity is just beyond. Of my own health I have little good to say, save to repeat the blessed promise, 'All things shall work together for *good* to them that love God.' I have been confined partially for a great portion of the winter. My lameness continues, though not so bad as it was at one time, and, in addition, I have lately had a new symptom on my lungs: a shortness of breath, and difficulty of breathing, which has greatly disturbed my rest at night. It seems something like the spasmodic asthma. The rest of our family are much as usual."

One other subject must not be overlooked. Dr. Fisk watched with great solicitude the progress and indications of the Oregon Mission. He received various communications from the missionaries while on their route and after their arrival, but there was nothing in the letters of sufficient importance to find a place in these memoirs. They found the representations made to them fully justified. The natives were mild, comparatively moral, and accessible to Christian instruction; but, in the far-off wilderness, the missionaries were compelled to spend so much time in procuring subsistence, that they could not pay the desired attention to their spiritual objects. Some progress, however, was made. The Reverend Jason Lee, according to the testimony of Governor M'Laughlin and others, conducted the affairs of the mission very judiciously, and gained an extensive influence in the territory, which promised well for the success of the undertaking. The mission family was established at Willamette. They had received considerable reinforcements in 1837, consisting of a physician, carpenter, blacksmith, two clergymen (Messrs. Leslie and Perkins),

with several ladies. These were busily engaged in their respective spheres, in laying the foundation and preparing the way for future operations. They had a prosperous school of about thirty children, and spent all the time they could in preaching to and otherwise instructing the natives. Meantime, Messrs. Perkins and Daniel Lee formed another station, about one hundred miles farther up the Columbia River, near the Great Falls, usually called the Dalles, where they found a people prepared to receive the Gospel. It was here that the astonishing work broke out in 1839, whereby more than five hundred souls were made subjects of saving grace, as related in the tract since issued at the Book Room.

Affairs wearing this favourable aspect, the Reverend Jason Lee resolved on a visit to the United States, with a view to excite still greater interest in the mission, and to procure additional supplies. He brought with him five native boys, of whom three were to be left in the states to be liberally educated, and the other two were to return. But, alas ! one of these, William Brooks, saw his home no more. Dr. Fisk was greatly interested in this company, and they not less so in him, regarding him as their parent and benefactor. Three weeks before Dr. Fisk's decease, Mr. Lee visited Middletown to confer with him on the interests of the mission, and while here held a public meeting in reference to it. On the afternoon preceding the meeting, which was held in the evening, they were several hours in consultation upon the subject, the result of which was, that Dr. Fisk sketched a plan for the employment and location of about thirty additional labourers in that field. This paper, in his own handwriting, is now before me. The re-enforcement sailed from New-York the following September.

In the evening Dr. Fisk attended the meeting, which was held in the Methodist Church, and took part in the exercises. It was his last appearance in an earthly sanctuary. Thus his final labours in public were in behalf of the Oregon Mission.

CHAPTER XX.

Rapid decline of Health.—Last Sickness.—Scenes in his Chamber.—Death.—Conclusion.

As we now approach the close of our subject's life, we are inclined to linger over our task, that we may prolong the contemplation of the scene which it presents to view. We love to stand in the evening amid the varied landscape, as the sun retires from our gaze, to watch the mellowing tints of light and shade which spread over the face of nature. But how much more interesting is it to watch the departure from its mortal sphere of some "bright particular star" of our moral firmament!

We have traced the progress of our subject's life from his childhood, and have seen the gradual development of his mental and moral powers, and the influence he exerted on the world. The little boy that climbed the snow-clad hills of Vermont on his way to the district school, has arisen before our eyes into the man, exerted a powerful influence on society, spread his name to distant regions, and become

"A kingly ruler in the realms of mind."

But his labours are now over, and there remains but a few more days of suffering and triumph to him—of instruction and sympathy to his friends. These days are bright with no mortal radiance. In Dr. Fisk's closing hours we have a striking illustration of the saying of an ancient philosopher, that "the pure soul leaves the body as the lightning flits from the cloud," shining brightest at the time of its departure.

"The body yields to death's all powerful summons,
While the bright image of eternity
Survives."

Nothing more clearly shows the adaptation of Christianity to the wants and aspirations of the human spirit, than the tranquillity with which it inspires its sincere votary in his closing hours. It satisfies the most distressing doubts; it throws light upon the darkness of the future; it gives the

soul a sure foundation on which to construct its hopes of immortality. The soul that assuredly relies on the atonement of our Lord and Saviour has a life-buoy to bear it up amid Death's dark billows. This is more than can be said of the proudest systems of human philosophy. The dying language of the greatest of the heathens, the immortal Stagirite, is well known to every scholar: "*Fæde hunc mundum intravi, anxius vixi, perturbatus egredior, causa causarum miserere mei.*" Meanly he had entered the world, anxiously he had lived, in disquietude he was departing. Piti-ful result of this world's boastful philosophy! Far different is the spirit of that faith which says, "To die is gain." "Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!"

We have already seen how much Dr. Fisk's health declined during the fall and winter of 1838. His limbs continued to swell, his expectoration was somewhat diminished, and his breathing became more difficult. These symptoms gradually advanced. On the 13th of January he preached his last sermon, and on the 14th he was employed nearly the whole day in sketching the plan of a new boarding hall for the University. That night he was dreadfully distressed with obstructed respiration, so that from two o'clock until five in the morning he was obliged to sit up in his chair. These turns came on subsequently every night, regularly increasing in severity; yet during the day, in pleasant weather, he was able to ride or walk out. The last occasion of his riding out was to visit a graduate of the University, who was lying ill two or three miles distant. It was not until the 31st of January that he confined himself to his room; and even then he retained strength to attend to business until the 5th of February, when, in the evening, with Mrs. Fisk's assistance, he sealed thirty letters, written for the benefit of the institution.

But he was now evidently and rapidly sinking, so that, on the 8th of February, a medical consultation was held upon his case. The decision was unfavourable to any prospect of his recovery or of his long continuance. On learning the result, Professor Johnston, who was with him soon after,

says "that it surprised him, yet he was perfectly calm, and began to arrange his affairs as though he was preparing for a pleasant journey." Then, after making some disposition of his papers with Professor Smith, his executor, he was assisted to his chair, in order to rest from the fatigue which his exertions had occasioned. Soon after being seated, he remarked in a whisper, for he was too weak to converse aloud, "What are all these things compared with the welfare of an immortal soul!" On being asked how the prospect of death now appeared to him, he immediately replied, "Death has no terrors to me; but I have not that open vision of Heaven I could desire. Pray for me, that the prospect before me may brighten. I feel that my life has been a series of imperfections, and there is nothing that I can rest my hopes upon but the merits of Christ." Soon after, he added, "There are a few things I would like to see done before taken from this world; but what am I, that I should have a hand in those things?" and, after another pause, he proceeded, "There is the poor University; but I hope you (meaning the professors) will stand by it, and that God will bless it."

The scene, or, rather, succession of scenes which took place after this in his dying chamber were in the highest degree instructive and elevating. It was almost an uninterrupted exhibition of moral sublimity. Many received lessons of wisdom and piety there which they will never forget. To these a gentleman alluded who was in Paris in 1841, at the re-interment of the bones of Napoleon, who, after describing that gorgeous but heartless pageantry, observes, "As I looked upon the coffin, I could not feel veneration for Napoleon; the halo of true glory shone not around it. The chamber where I saw that good man, the late Dr. Willbur Fisk, calmly and triumphantly meeting his fate, was to me a scene of infinitely higher and more enviable glory." We may be allowed, under such circumstances, to enter somewhat fully into the particulars.

To conceive properly of the situation of our sufferer, it ought to be understood, that such was his difficulty of breathing that he was obliged to keep his chest as nearly as possi-

ble in an erect posture. Though it was winter, but little fire could be kept in the room; the door was always partly open, and then he required almost constant fanning to aid his respiration. As he could not lay down more than one hour in twenty-four, the pain and weariness he endured were indescribable. Though his breathing was at all times laborious, he had frequent paroxysms of extreme violence, during which it appeared as though each breath would be his last. At these seasons he could only gasp out a word or a syllable at a time. Much of what we shall record was uttered in that manner.

As we were from home during the earlier part of his illness, we rely on accounts furnished us by Mrs. Fisk, and several friends who took notes at the time; and, as his observations were dispersed throughout the last fourteen days of his illness, on a variety of topics, we have thought that, instead of following the order of time, it would be more agreeable to the reader, and make a more distinct impression on the mind, to have them arranged according to subjects. We do not, however, profess to insert all that was said at this mournfully interesting period; we select such passages as were thought most remarkable, and especially illustrative of their author's character.

The reader will be struck with several peculiarities in these observations. He will see at every turn our subject's distinctive characteristics, his prevailing sentiments, feelings, and interests. He will not only observe the hallowing influence and out-beaming radiance of his piety, but his peculiar humility, calmness, patience, consideration. Nothing seemed to be forgotten by him in which he had before felt a concern; especially the interests of religion, education, his family and friends, were all very nigh his heart, and were thought of and cared for in the midst of his deepest agonies. It was a frequent expression of those around him, "Dr. Fisk is himself to the very last!" Surely those who had the privilege of being in

"The chamber where the good man met his fate,"

will never lose the salutary lessons there imbibed.

And, first, of his LOWLY VIEWS OF HIMSELF AND OF HIS OWN

LABOURS, we have clear and strong testimony. Thus at one time he said,

"When I look back, I wonder at the little I have done. And what is rest to me" (he had just been speaking of rest in Heaven), "that I should indulge anticipations of it, while there are so many unconverted in the world, going down to eternal wo? I see much to be done; but any active mind can do it: and the work of God is in his own hands. He can do without me. What am I, or my father's house, that God should have honoured me to share in the ministry of the Gospel? I bless Him that He has made me the humble instrument of doing anything—the least thing—for Him. It is all of grace. Boasting is excluded. The glory is all his, the shame all mine. I want a score of years more to do anything like what a man ought to do in the course of his life."

And again: "O, how little have I done! O, the many deficiencies! I feel constrained to ask forgiveness of the Church and of the world." * * "I shall be a star of small magnitude, but it is a wonder that I shall get to Heaven at all. It is because love works miracles that such a feeble, sinful worm may be saved by grace. O, the mercy of God, to put such comeliness on such a worm as I! I am an unprofitable servant. How little have I done of what I might have done!"

When one remarked to him that he "knew of no one in whose life there were fewer things to regret," he replied, "I do not feel so at all. I feel full of imperfections and frailties."

Thus, "having no confidence in the flesh," ALL HIS HOPE OF SALVATION RESTED ON THE ATONEMENT OF THE LAMB. "What a blessed state to be in," he observed, "to be anything God pleases. The will of God appears unspeakably beautiful to me; but, alas! I fail of fulfilling it in a great many ways. But, for all this, I have thrown myself on the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. O, yes! I feel that my soul is centred in the love of God in Christ Jesus." Thus, again, "If I have been instrumental in a little good, I thank God for it. I am an unprofitable servant. All my hope is in

Christ." At another time, apparently at the close of some train of silent thought, he said, "Rights? I have no rights, but my Saviour has rights; and he bestows them on me. It is all of grace."

Once only did he experience any peculiar TEMPTATION or MENTAL CONFLICT. In the early part of his illness, he remarked that "the enemy was thrusting sore" at him, and immediately said to the Rev. Horace Bartlett, "If you have any faith, pray." When the prayer was closed, he expressed his deliverance from the gathering cloud, and from that time nothing seemed to obstruct his view of his Saviour and the better world.

HIS FAITH IN THE TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY never wavered. When asked if he still believed the doctrines which he had preached to others, he replied, with emphasis, "Yes; they are God's truths, and will bear the light of eternity."

He always entertained LOFTY VIEWS OF THE NATURE AND HOLY PRIVILEGES OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY. Thus, when the Rev. Messrs. Granger and Tyler, of the Congregational Church, called to see him, "he immediately," says the former, "began to converse about the solemn responsibilities of the ministry," observing, "I hope you will give the trumpet a more certain sound than I have ever done." On Mr. G.'s saying to him, "Our 'Lord had need of him' in the higher employments of Heaven," he replied, "It may be: I have often thought, too, that the occupation in Heaven would be to do God's will and promote his glory. When I surrendered myself to the cause of God, it was a full surrender to do his will, anywhere and anyhow, as he would please: and perhaps I may be employed in some way to advance the cause of redemption on earth."

To the Rev. Mr. Cookson, of the Baptist Church, he said, "I am leaving the walls, but I leave you on them. God bless you, and make you more faithful in sounding the Gospel trumpet than I have been. O, the responsibilities of a minister! O, may not the blood of souls be found in our skirts!"

Mr. Cookson inquired if he felt the expression of the venerable Wesley, "The best of all is, God is with us." "O

yes," he replied, "nature indeed is yielding, but God remains."

He was always remarkably fond of singing, and often requested that some of HIS FAVOURITE HYMNS might be sung. Among these was the one in the Methodist Collection, commencing,

"Jesus, the name high over all,"

of the last stanza of which,

"Happy if with my latest breath
I may but gasp his name,
Preach him to all, and cry in death,
Behold, behold the Lamb!"

he was particularly fond, requesting that it might be sung more than once. And when, at his request, Dr. Watts's hymn was sung, commencing,

"Lord, in thy temple we appear,"

he repeated the last stanzas distinctly in a whisper, thus:

"Jesus, the vision of thy face
Hath overpowering charms;
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
If thou be in my arms.

And while you hear my heartstrings break,
How sweet my moments roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
But glory in my soul."

Sunday, the 10th of February, was a day of uncommon interest and solemnity. There was not the least prospect of his recovery, so that it was not thought necessary to restrain him from conversing; and yet his strength was not so far exhausted as to prevent the free play of his mind and feelings. The scene in his chamber was transcendently elevating. In the morning he asked Mrs. Fisk what day it was. On ascertaining, he observed, "This would be a good day to die." "Perhaps," said Mrs. Fisk, "the Lord will take you to his rest this day." "Then I can worship," was his answer, "with the Sabbath-keeping band in Heaven; but I cannot here." On being told that he always loved the Sabbath, "Yes," he replied; "and though it was a day of toil to me, yet I loved my work. To me the Sabbath has been an

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emblem of that promised rest. Oh, that rest is sweet! It is glorious!"

He then beckoned Martha to him, saying, "Let us pray together;" and, throwing an arm round each of them as they knelt before him, he offered up a prayer, gasping it out word by word, which seemed the very language of the spiritual world. It was deep, pathetic, powerful, sublime. Then, as they arose from their knees, he said, "Vain human reasoners often tell us that the soul and the body will go down together to the dust, because the spirit is depressed when the body is; but it is not true. These clogs of earth have often retarded the operations of my mind, and been as so many barriers to its activity. But I now feel a strength of soul and an energy of mind which this body, though afflicted and pained, cannot impair.

"The soul has an energy of its own; and so far from my body pressing my soul down to the dust, I feel as if my soul had almost power to raise the body upward and bear it away; and it will at last, by the power of God, effectually draw it to Heaven, for its attractions are thitherward." Then, turning to Mrs. Fisk, he said, "Think not, when you see this poor feeble body stretched in death, that that is your husband. O no! your husband will have escaped free and liberated from every clog! He will have new-plumed his glad wings, and soared away through the ethereal regions to that celestial city of light and love! What! talk of burying your husband! No, never. Your husband cannot be buried! he will be in Heaven. His body may be; and let it go, and mingle with its mother earth: why should you lament? And yet I love this body, notwithstanding it has so often been a hinderance to the aspirations of my mind; for it has been an old companion of mine. It has cost me much care and pain, its tendency being continually to decay; and though it may lie long in the grave, it shall be raised, and I shall see it again; for I hope to be united with it, but with none of its infirmities, with none of its moral deformities. Yes, every particle of this dust shall be raised and changed, in the twinkling of an eye, on the morning of the resurrection. Then it will be freed from all its infirmities. It will

have no lame limbs, no weak lungs. It will be refined from all its gross particles. It will be buoyant and ethereal, glorious and immortal! It will be perfect, for it will be fashioned like unto Christ's most glorious body, and united with the soul forever!"

The above sublime sentiments were uttered with the greatest difficulty, when almost every moment it appeared as though the power of respiration must cease.

His last communications with HIS FAMILY were in keeping with his character. Perceiving Mrs. Fisk's overwhelming grief, on ascertaining the decision of the physicians in his case, "My dear wife," he said, "I have always loved you; I have loved to love you; and you were never dearer to me than at this moment. But do not distress my dying moments with your grief. This ought not so to be. I have a great work to do: you must help me by your prayers. I have always thought I should outlive you, and have always prayed that this cup might never be yours; that it might be reserved for me; for I know how unable you are to bear it. But God seems determining otherwise. Bear it? You cannot bear it! But God will help you; for he has promised to be the widow's God and husband, and he will not fail!" At this time also, beckoning Mrs. Fisk's mother and Martha to him, he offered up, as they knelt around him, a prayer most touching and beautiful. A competent judge who was present remarked that, if Dr. Fisk had been in his study, in his most favoured moments, he could scarcely have written one more appropriate and eloquent.

At a later period of his illness, on Mrs. Fisk expressing her grief, he said, "I fear you do not give me up. O, give me up to God. Our tie will not be sundered; it will only be strengthened by a purer hope. God will be your husband: rely on him in simple faith, and all shall be well."

At another time he said, "Our parting will not be long. Time seems to me like a mere point. Eternity swallows up all." * * * "Imagination's utmost stretch cannot measure eternity. Oh, my dear, build your hopes on nothing but Jesus, and him crucified! The doctrines of the cross only have efficacy to raise you to Heaven, where I trust we shall

soon meet. Oh, then shall we be in possession of those beauties which charm the angels, and bind them to the throne of God."

He felt great concern at the dependant condition in which his wife and adopted daughter would be left. Having always had an impression that he should outlive Mrs. Fisk, whose health was but feeble, he had made for her but a slender provision. Hence, in an early part of his illness, when he had signed his will, after a short pause, he said to Mrs. Fisk, "There will be but little, nor can you expect much from the New-England Conference."* Dr. Miner, his attendant physician, as if to relieve him of his anxiety, said, "The public will expect a memoir. It may be written for Mrs. Fisk's benefit." He replied, "Nothing can be said of me." "The public will expect it; will you please to name your biographer?" After a pause, he replied, "Possibly; then it is my request that Professor Holdich should write it for Mrs. Fisk's benefit, if sufficient papers can be found to justify it." Turning to Mrs. F., he added, "You will furnish what you have." He had previously made the same nomination.

A striking evidence of his affectionate and tender spirit was given in the early part of his illness, but when he was supposed to be very near his end. Recollecting that he had not written Mrs. Fisk's name in a book which he had recently given her, he called for it, and in his chair, with the book on his knee, with a trembling hand he wrote, "From her affectionate and dying husband to Mrs. Fisk.—W. Fisk."

THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY lay very near the heart of Dr. Fisk throughout his sickness. We have already had some evidence of this. Afterward, when one spoke to him of the loss it would sustain in his death, he said, "I think it is of God, and if so, He will no doubt take care of it. If it is not, certainly I have been connected with it long enough. It has always been my aim, and, so far as I know the feelings of the Faculty, it has been the aim of us all, to send young men into the world to make it better."

Again, when one spoke to him of the difficulty of filling

* Alluding to the inadequacy of its funds to meet the demands of the several claimants.

his place in the Faculty, he observed, "It will be easy to find another president, but not so easy to find another father."

Then, having requested THE PROFESSORS who were present to come round him, he expressed his fear and regret that the Church generally was not sufficiently alive to the interests of the University; when he observed to them, "On you, therefore, will devolve a double duty. Oh, be faithful! Hitherto you have been faithful." Then to Professor Smith he said, "I thank you for the interest you have ever manifested in relieving my burden. You and Professor Huber have been associated with me the longest; you have, therefore, shared with me the deepest in the cares, the interests, and the poverty of the University. But you will not lose your reward. I would express my love and gratitude to you all for your kindness to me. It gives me great pleasure to reflect how pleasantly we have always lived together, not only in college, but in our little family circle. We have shared each other's joys and each other's sorrows." He then commended his afflicted wife to their care and sympathy, observing, "I believe she has added years to my life by her constant care and nursing. You will love her for my sake when I am gone." The lady of one of the professors assured him they had done so, and should do so still.

At another time, speaking of the professors, he observed, "We all loved each other, and lived together in such harmony;" when the lady of one of them replied, "Yes, doctor, but you were the magnet that drew us all together.—We all loved you." "Yes," was his characteristic answer, "but not because I was worthy."

Speaking of the University and the professors leads us naturally to speak of THE STUDENTS. We have had sufficient proof, in the course of this memoir, of the reciprocal affection existing between them and their president. Deep was the sorrow which filled their hearts on learning his present condition; with earnestness they desired a parting interview with their revered instructor and guardian. He desired that they might all be admitted. On seeing them at the door of his chamber, he beckoned them to approach, and, as they came one by one, he gave each his feeble hand, and

bade them an affectionate farewell, adapting his advice or admonition to each with admirable discernment and propriety. It was remarkable that, though not less than a hundred—it was just the commencement of the term, and many of the students had not yet arrived—received his dying counsel, yet to no two did he speak alike. The impression on the minds of the students was very deep. One of them, in a letter to another, who was absent, says, “O! what a scene was this! I may forget the name of my father, and know not the mother who bore me, as soon as will the memory of that day pass from me.”

It will not be supposed that he overlooked or neglected HIS PARENTS in his final remembrances. At an early period of his illness he remarked, “My dear aged parents, how will they bear the stroke? God will strengthen them for all his will.” Then looking at Mrs. F., he said, “Write to them, as soon as you can, all the particulars of my sickness. Give my best love to them. Tell them I have always hoped to be permitted to close their eyes, and that they would be spared the pain of weeping over me. But it is the will of God, and it is all right. Wherein I have failed in duty, I believe they will put it down to poor human nature. Give my best love to all of them. Tell them (the whole family) I believe I shall meet them all in Heaven, and in that I greatly rejoice; and that I die at peace with God and all mankind.”

He did not forget HIS ENGLISH BRETHREN. A letter, which had for some time been expected from England, arrived on the 12th, in which he evinced deep interest. When the letter was read to him, he said, “Dear, dear brethren! it is so like them! I shall meet them in Heaven.”

When Dr. Fisk’s illness became generally known, which was very soon after his attack, it produced an uncommon sensation in the public mind, especially in our own Church. Immediately the Board of Managers of the Methodist Missionary Society in New-York held a special meeting upon the subject, passed appropriate resolutions in reference to it, and appointed a delegation of nine members “to repair forthwith to Middletown,” thus the resolution reads, “in to-

ken of the interest felt in the present season of alarm on account of our esteemed brother, and that they be authorized, in the event of his death, to prepare and adopt, on behalf of this board, such resolutions of condolence as the melancholy occasion may require, and take such other measures as circumstances may call for."

The Rev. Dr. Bangs, the Rev. John Lindsey, and Gabriel P. Disosway, Esq., being on the committee, fulfilled this mournful office; the others were not able to go. When Dr. Fisk, at their introduction, was informed of the action of the Board of Managers, he observed, "I feel very grateful, though very unworthy of such attention. It is, however, only an additional evidence of the Christian sympathy and brotherly affection I have so long beheld among my brethren."

One of the gentlemen spoke to him of his future prospects. Among other remarks expressive of his Christian hopes, he said, in allusion to the violent paroxysms he had passed through, "I have been in sight of the port, and thought to have entered it before now. But O! what a rough sea I had to contend with! But I am driven back, and now feel myself in a calmer sea. What I may be called to contend with before I enter the harbour of rest, I know not; but all is right which God orders. The distance between the two worlds is exceedingly short. It is but a step from one to the other."

To Dr. Bangs he gave a commission to say to the New-York Conference, "That I give it as my dying request that they nurse the Wesleyan University—that they must exert themselves to sustain and carry it forward."

At an early period of his illness, when he had taken leave of his friends and left some messages for the absent, Mrs. Fisk asked him if he had any message for the NEW-ENGLAND CONFERENCE. He replied, "I have not strength to frame one. Yet you may say to them, 'O, be faithful! And that, although we have had some difference of opinion, I die at peace with them, and at peace with all mankind; and I hope they will strive to meet me in Heaven, where we shall see eye to eye.'"

The delegation, finding Dr. Fisk too low to converse, and yet with no immediate prospect of a dissolution, returned home the following day. On ascertaining their departure, he expressed his regret, observing, "I have been trying to save my strength to talk with Dr. Bangs. But I shall meet them all in Heaven." Then turning to Mrs. Fisk, he said, "Write to Dr. Bangs, and say that it is my request that my writings which have been published may be collected into one form, and published for your benefit, for you can expect but little from the New-England Conference. Tell Dr. Bangs to say to the brethren that I believe they would wish to see you provided for, and if there should be more than you need, let it go to the University: I think it will do more good to the Church generally. If I had thousands to leave, I should think I was benefiting the general Church most by leaving it to the University; for, I trust, streams will issue from it which will greatly assist in fertilizing our whole moral vineyard. Education must go hand in hand with religion, or the world will never be converted without a direct miracle from God. Our people will take care of our other institutions, but I fear they are not sufficiently awake to the subject of education. O! if I could only feel that our people—our brethren in the ministry—were alive to the interests of the University, how it would cheer my departure. But I leave it in the hands of a good God, who has blessed it beyond our most sanguine expectations, and, I trust, will continue to bless it for the good of the Church and for his own glory."

When he was asked his views of the COLONIZATION SOCIETY, he replied, "The same they have ever been. I regret that I did not join that society sooner. I rejoice that I joined it when I did. It is the cause of God, and will prevail."

At a later period of his sickness, another asked him the same question, not knowing that it had been asked before, alluding also to the assertion of some, that he would change his mind when he should come to die. He answered in substance as before, but added, "I advocated that cause from principle: it was not blind impulse or passion, though

I may sometimes have erred in spirit. But they have been *unbrotherly* in imputing to me motives that were never in my heart."

To the Reverend Mr. Granger he spoke of the happiness of the UNION OF ALL REAL CHRISTIANS of whatever name. "Oh," said he, "the near prospect of Heaven seems to swallow up all these little distinctions which separate evangelical Christians."

The reader has had ample proof of his LOVE OF LABOUR, and the following remarks show how he looked upon this subject now. Hearing Mrs. Fisk say something about his life being sacrificed, he looked up and said, "Sacrifice—sacrifice—what did you say?" and, on being asked if he did not know what his physicians said of his case, he replied, "Yes; they say my nervous system is prostrated; and that, to be sure, looks like it. But it is too late now." A few minutes after, having been placed in his chair, he said, "I do not know but my friends will think I have done wrong in exerting myself so much—and I do not know but I have; but I have not intended it. It is, however, much more pleasant to me *now* to look back, and feel that I have endeavoured to exert myself to the utmost of my strength—for you know I could do but little at best—than it would be to look back on a life of idleness. We were not placed here to be idle; no, nor shall we be idle in Heaven. I feel, indeed, as if I should hardly want to go there if I thought I should be idle. If the Lord take me away, he has something for me to do; for he never gave me such an energy of soul as I now feel that I have, without designing to employ it."

Those who have followed our memoirs of this truly wonderful and exalted man, have had repeated proofs of those twin virtues, DISINTERESTEDNESS and GRATITUDE. These shone brightly in him to the last. We were struck with the former in a little incident which occurred on Monday, February the 11th. One of his attendant physicians, Dr. Woodward, was sent for by another patient. As he was leaving the room, Dr. Fisk said, "The doctor will not leave me now. I feel that the paroxysm will be very severe." But on being told that it was to a lady, who was very sick, he

said, "Oh, then, let him go;" and immediately said to **Mrs. Fisk**, "We must pray for her," immediately closing his eyes as if to engage in silent prayer. Thus, in his own deepest agony, he had sympathy to bestow on others, and was ready to part with assistance even which he needed for himself.

In the same spirit he manifested the most lively gratitude for even slight favours, and at the same time evinced the greatest uneasiness at giving trouble. This he expressed to those friends who, from time to time, came to watch with him. To one he would say, "Have you left your own dear homes?" to another, "your own sweet little flock?" to a third, "your comfortable bed?" to a fourth, "Have you chosen the chamber of suffering to wait on me—poor unworthy me?" and at one time, when a friend attempted to support him in an easier posture, he said, "It will not afford relief enough to compensate you for your fatigue. I am sure I do not know what I am spared for, unless to furnish an opportunity of showing the patience of my friends. Sure never man had such friends." At another time he observed, "O that I could die in an obscure corner, rather than give such trouble to my friends!" Indeed, throughout his sickness he made innumerable observations of the same nature, showing his gratitude, his care for others, and his oblivion of self.

We have already observed that our patient sufferer, owing to his difficulty in respiration, was unable to lie but an hour or two in twenty-four, and that but for very brief periods. He sat in his chair, supported by pillows, which needed to be differently placed every few minutes, to change his position and give him relief. His pain and weariness were unutterable. This fact gave rise to some painfully interesting remarks. Thus, at one time, after he had lain on the bed a few moments, he said, "I can find no rest—tried the bed; but my body is sore all over. I cannot lie on it. What must a man do when he can neither lie nor sit? O weary, weary me! When shall I find rest—rest in the grave?" Again, after a fruitless effort to lie down, he said, "I have always thought I should have a lingering sickness, but an

easy death. I would like to have my bed my dying pillow ; but my Saviour died on the cross." He then repeated the stanza commencing

"How bitter that cup,"

and ending,

"Did *Jesus* thus suffer, and shall *I* repine!"

At another time, when nature seemed exhausted and life was fast ebbing out, as he was lifted from the bed to his chair, he sighed forth, "From the chair to the throne!"

During the entire period of his unparalleled sufferings, his PATIENCE was wonderful. No expression of dissatisfaction escaped him, nor any appearance of peevishness or irritation, even under the greatest distress, nor when disappointed of expected relief. Thus, on one occasion, after many ineffectual attempts to ease his pain and weariness by changing his position, at length looking up, with one of his sweet smiles, he said, "We will try to make it do. I hope you will not think me impatient because I want moving so often."

At another time he remarked, "I hope I am not impatient; I groan and sigh a great deal; and I have, perhaps, been in the habit of it all my life" (no one else thought so); "but I hope it is not impatience; and I think it is not. It is only one of Nature's own methods of expressing her agony; and I do not know but she finds relief in that way."

After a season of intense anguish, he said, "All this and not death? I thought I was almost home; but if the Lord bid me suffer, I would say, 'Thy will be done!' I would have no will but his. Oh, it is sweet to sink into the will of God, and feel that all is well!"

It was admirable to observe how, while consciousness remained, Dr. Fisk maintained his individuality. He was himself throughout; only each grace, each virtue, shining, if possible, with increased radiance. For thus

"The unrobing spirit cast
Diviner glories to the last."

This was partly seen in his observations to the great variety of persons who visited him in the chamber of death. He had no stereotyped phrases, which retain their form when their original import is evaporated. He uttered his own

unpremeditated thoughts and feelings, addressing each one with admirable judgment and adaptation, and wonderful variety. Thus, to an aged *physician*, who called as a friend to see him, he remarked, "You see, sir, this poor, suffering *body*, fast wasting away : yes, it will soon see corruption. But the kernel must decay, that the germe may come forth in immortal beauty. The Saviour's love has purchased it for sinful man !" And to a gentleman, with whom he had been often engaged in transacting business for the University, he remarked, as he held out his feeble hand to greet him on his entrance, "You see me here, sir, hovering between two worlds." "And fit for either," was the expressive answer.

Towards the close of his illness, Dr. Fisk gradually approached a state of lethargy or coma, from which, at times, it was somewhat difficult to arouse him. But even then, when brought to sensibility, he manifested his usual characteristics ; and even in his wanderings his accustomed mental tendencies were clearly discerned. His remarks were often, apparently, detached from some intellectual process, like shining particles broken off from a diamond. Thus, at one time he said, "It has saved us from many absurdities ;" at another, "We do not undertake to correct popular expressions." At one time he seemed to be preaching a sermon ; at another time, arranging a class, when, apparently, after several ineffectual attempts to regulate them, he said, in the mildest manner, "Well, if you will not do it, I cannot help it ; I cannot explain myself better." At another time he called for a paper : "One with Hebrew letters, adapted to this case." Yet, when roused from these reveries, he was alive to the name of the Saviour, and to the voice of piety and devotion.

Throughout his illness, the dying saint had been distinguished no less for COOLNESS and SELF-POSSESSION, than for the loftiness and power of Christian faith. He watched the progress of his own symptoms ; from his skill in pathology, he knew how to interpret his feelings, and remarked upon them with the coolness of a spectator. In consequence of a partial paralysis of the nerves connected with the organs of respiration, he could not breathe but by a voluntary exer-

tion. Observing this, he said, "I cannot endure long. Difficulty of breathing prevents sleep. Breathing is voluntary, and requires effort. When I lay in a doze and forget myself, I cease to breathe, and then it wakes me." At another time, on opening the door to give him air, he said, "It is of no use. There is air enough, but I cannot inhale. There is a want of energy in the respiratory nerves. They have no power. I was perfectly sensible of it yesterday, and all the physicians agree in that."

February 14th, as his regular physician, Dr. Miner, was examining his pulse, he faintly said, "Why do you examine the pulse without prescribing? Is it low?" "Yes, sir, very low." "Is it fluttering?" "Not yet, sir." "Not yet?" he replied, faintly; and then sighed out, "The hour of release is at hand."

On the 19th, as one came into the room, he said, "I am going very fast—filling up with water—feet and hands swelling more;" at the same time rubbing his hands together. At another time, as he extended his dying hand to greet a friend who had been sent for, he said, "I believe I am going;" and soon after broke out in a distinct though interrupted articulation,

"There is my house and portion fair,
My treasure and my friends are there;"

some of them, at least, and the rest are on their way." And on being asked if he still believed in the doctrines which he had preached, he answered, "I do. They are God's truths, and will bear the light of eternity. I should be glad to be favoured with more ecstatic joy. As I draw near the celestial world, it seems desirable to have a bright view of its glories." To the Rev. Heman Bangs, who came to see him in his last moments, and said that he had "dreamed of seeing him in his sick chamber, and that the room seemed filled with coruscations of glory," he replied, "I have not those coruscations of glory—those bright visions of the heavenly world, but I have a fixed peace."

Thus he continued, gradually sinking into unconsciousness, from which it became increasingly difficult to arouse him; nevertheless, when aroused, his mind seemed perfectly clear. On the 20th, when articulation was rapidly failing

him, a friend said to him, "You suffer a great deal of distress, sir, from fatigue and exhaustion; but it must be over soon: and how sweet is rest to a weary man. There is a place 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.'" He responded distinctly, "Bless God for that!" And on the 21st, when he was still farther sunk into coma, the same friend coming into the room, said, "I have come to see you again, sir; do you know me?" Pressing his hand, he said in a whisper, "Yes; glorious hope!" After this, when Mrs. Fisk took his hand and inquired if he knew her, he returned the pressure, saying, "Yes, love, yes." These, we believe, were the last words he uttered. He lingered on our mortal shores until the next day, when, about ten o'clock in the forenoon, his redeemed and now disenthralled spirit took its flight to its kindred skies, to mingle with the Church of the first-born, and join the anthems of the celestial choir. Thus the anniversary of the day that gave a hero and a patriot to the world, is the anniversary of the day that gave another sanctified spirit to Paradise. Let the names of Washington and Fisk, both great in their respective departments, blend in future unison. Their happy spirits have long since greeted each other in the plains of the brighter world above.

As the body lay in the coffin, arrayed in the habiliments of the grave, its appearance was singularly lovely. Every trace of its past agonies had disappeared. The brow was perfectly unwrinkled, and his own peculiar smile seemed to be playing about the mouth. The anticipations of the spirit appeared to have left their influence on its former dwelling-place; for

"Living light had touched the brow of death."

As Dr. Fisk's illness had created a deep sensation in the public mind, so his death drew together a vast concourse of mourners. They came from far and near. Although the weather was very unfavourable, yet the large church in which the services were held could not accommodate the people. The funeral address, delivered by the Rev. Dr. Means, of Emory College, Georgia, was appropriate and eloquent, leaving few dry eyes in the congregation. The performance by the choir of those beautiful pieces,

"Unveil thy bosom, faithful tomb,"

and,

"Thou art gone to the grave, but we will not deplore thee,"

will, by many who were present, never be forgotten. The body was borne to the grave, at their especial request, by the Middletown company of artillery, in which Dr. Fisk had held the office of chaplain. His body reposes under the green sod of the College Cemetery, near to those of Professor John M. Smith, Aaron H. Hurd, and some others, with whom he had held "sweet converse" among the living. Thus far not one has been interred in that ground but in a bright hope of the glorious resurrection; and when they shall come forth, a radiant band, at the sound of the last trump, then shall Fisk appear as the central star, and the brightest in the constellation. A plain monumental shaft marks the place of his repose, bearing in front the simple inscription,

"WILLBUR FISK, S.T.D.,

"FIRST PRESIDENT OF THE WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY:"

and on the reverse, the dates of his birth and death.

No monumental eulogy could enumerate his virtues, and no other title was needed to secure his individuality.

His age was forty-seven years, five months, and twenty-two days.

Having taken great pains, in the progress of this work, to draw out and fairly exhibit the distinctive features of our subject's character, we deem it unnecessary to append any formal delineation. Besides, after the scenes just described, we have no disposition to obtrude ourselves longer upon the reader's attention. God grant that the perusal of these memorials may awaken in many hearts ardent aspirations after similar excellence. Our subject, as we infer from one of his letters, set before himself the beautiful model of the "heavenly Fletcher of Madely;" we commend to imitation the bright example of Willbur Fisk. May you, dear reader, so "follow *him* as *he* followed Christ."

THE END.

New-York, 1842.

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